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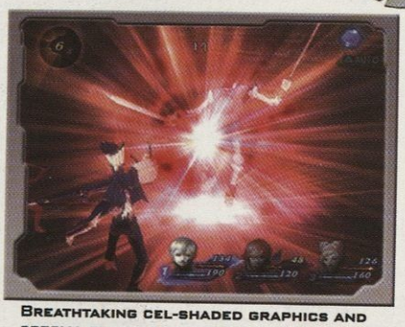

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# A Thousand Words

SINCE OUR EDITOR CAN'T DRAW TO SAVE HIS LIFE, HE FILLED THE FINAL PAGE WITH A HEAPING HELPING OF TEXT

## Hardcore in five easy steps

**FOR EVERY ENTHUSIAST** activity, there's a pecking order—and anime is no different.

At the bottom are the ignorant masses: These are the people who buy one or two anime DVDs a year, often unwittingly, sometimes by mistake. Above them are the casual fans: a slightly smarter bunch who are familiar with the term "anime" but only follow the most popular, mainstream shows. The next level up are the serious fans: folks who read anime magazines (*ahem*), peruse anime websites, sometimes preorder their titles, occasionally join an anime club and try to attend at least one anime con a year. Then there are the elite: the hardcore.

Now, you might think that being the editor of an anime magazine automatically catapults me into the "hardcore" category. Well, think again. To be hardcore is one of the toughest achievements in anime fandom. It takes a Herculean effort to trundle through the tangle of contradictory and seemingly arbitrary requirements to join this lofty group. While I might consider myself one of the most "serious" anime fans I know, that's just ain't enough. Simply said, I am not hardcore.

I'm guessing the majority of people reading this page are in the same category as me—serious fans who fall just shy of hardcore. But that doesn't mean you can't aspire to hardcore status. In fact, I've been doing a bit of research on hardcore fans lately, and I've compiled five quick requirements that will help you achieve this goal. While this list is by no means comprehensive, it will guarantee you admission to the ranks of the anime elite—if you manage to satisfy all five. Remember, it's not enough to just have one or two of these requirements under your belt. We're talking about being hardcore here, after all.

**You must have two DVD players.** Well, duh. Who doesn't? And when you include PCs and game consoles, that number jumps even higher. But see, sheer volume isn't good enough. To be truly hardcore, you need to satisfy three more conditions: 1. Both DVD players must be in the same room, hooked up to separate TVs (or monitors). 2. At least one of them must be able to play Region 2 discs. 3. You must use both DVD players to simultaneously watch an original Japanese release alongside the US version in order to irrefutably prove your assertion that one frame is missing from episode 572 of ***Sailor Moon***, then immediately hop onto your favorite message board to rant about various conspiracy theories related to this missing frame.

**You don't like dubs.** Look, I'm a proud dub fan. I refuse to work when it comes to my favorite form of entertainment, and reading all those icky subtitles really makes my lips sore. But this isn't yet another rehash of that tired old sub/dub debate. Go ahead and like what you like—it's all good to me. However, to rank among the hardcore, you must hate, hate, *hate* dubs. You must abhor them with such a passion that you're apoplectic over the fact that they simply exist—even though the vast majority of anime DVDs include a perfectly acceptable subtitle track, complete with an accurate translation and original Japanese voices. Still, you must grouse about specific voice actors butchering the performance on a dub track that you apparently refuse to watch. You must know more about dubs than those who watch them, because you're an expert on everything that's wrong with them. (*Bonus hardcore points:* If you've ever prattled on about the poor quality of dubs while waiting in line to get a US voice actor's autograph at your local anime con, then you are among the hardcore elite.)

**You know what "ADR" means.** It's not enough to know what an ADR director *does*. You have to know what those three letters actually stand for. And you also have to be willing to do the quick research to find out what other shows a particular ADR director has worked on (then again, you should probably already know). While we're at it, you need to be the type of person who reads every last line of the credits, down to the freakin' copyright, in hopes of gaining some sort of insight into the production process. It's almost as if, buried in those credits is a mystical assortment of factoids to justify your feelings about a particular show. (Yes, I realize this requirement seems to contradict the one directly above it, since the credits are as much about the US production as the original Japanese one, but if you're to count yourself among the hardest of the hardcore, you'll have to accept that you're a bundle of delightfully enigmatic contradictions.)

Follow these five steps to achieving hardcore status, and every single one of the gorgeous gals from *Gravion Zwei* will line up to combine their mecha with yours...

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**Your interest in a US release is in direct proportion to the quality of the collector's box.** What is it with hardcore anime fans and chipboard boxes? And just what is "chipboard" anyway? The way this magical material is discussed online, you'd think it's composed of pixie dust, catnip, gold shavings and crack cocaine. Now, as a "serious" anime fan, I'll be the first to admit how tickled I am when a quality show comes in a sturdy collector's box. I like the way they look on my shelf. I like to collect them. But if I want a show, I want *that show*. In other words, I want the content of the DVD more than the sturdiness of the box it comes in. But that's just not good enough if you want to be hardcore. You must be willing to walk away from a purchase simply because the collector's box isn't hearty enough.

**Your complaints are in inverse proportion to your purchases.** So you get online and gripe. Then gripe some more. Then gripe about how others are griping about things that you wish you thought of griping about first. But here's the thing: That title you've been carping on? You've preordered it—and despite your bilious protestations and furious promises to import the Region 2 DVD because it's more "pure," you will still buy said title.

And there you have it: five easy steps to vault you into the elite ranks of the hardcore anime fan. Think I've missed some other key requirements to being hardcore? Send me your thoughts at letters@newtype-usa.com, and mark the subject line "hardcore."

*—Gary Steinman*
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# ABOUT NEWTYPE USA

Maybe this is your first time reading *Newtype USA*. Or maybe you're one of those obsessive types, consumed with a desire to devour every single word of your magazines. Either way, you're here, on this page, reading these words. Since we aim to please, we put together a quickie guide to *Newtype USA*. Just for you.

## Who we are

*Newtype USA* is the official English-language version of *Newtype*, Japan's No. 1 source for information about anime and manga. Because we're a licensed magazine, we get to bring you all the best stories from our Japanese counterpart (translated, naturally), along with exclusive art that you won't find anywhere else in the universe. Many of the spreads in *Newtype* are created solely for the magazine, so be sure to enjoy all the exclusive scoops and beautiful images.

*Newtype USA* also comes packed with plenty of original US content, including features, news and reviews for all the latest releases. Want the details on that DVD you've been craving? We got ya covered! So be sure to turn to *NTUSA* not only for cutting-edge content, but also for info on titles hitting stores as you read this.

Plus, there's an exclusive free DVD packed into every issue! And you definitely don't want to miss our sexy centerfolds!

## What's with this right-to-left format?

Let's get something clear here: People in Japan have been reading and writing a lot longer than us English-speaking folks. So don't even think about calling this book backward! This is a magazine that focuses on Japanese pop culture, so it's only fitting that it follows a similar format to other Japanese magazines, including its namesake. But that's not the only reason *Newtype USA* is read from right to left. Because much of the art in this magazine is originally drawn to fit the format of the Japanese *Newtype*, it makes sense to keep things consistent. The same goes for the manga insert, which is created to flow in the traditional Japanese format.

## When is [*insert name here*] coming out?

So you just read about a superkeen new series that you're eager to get your grubby hands on. But you can't find it in any stores. Arghhhh!

No, we're not simply torturing you by covering tantalizing titles that aren't coming out anytime soon. Actually, we're just as eager as you are to see these series localized by any one of our favorite US anime companies. Fact is, most of Japan's top-tier titles will be released in the US at some point, and often deals are made that can't be officially announced at press time. So if something grabs your eye, pay special attention to that title credit that runs with almost every feature; that's where you'll find the latest info on a US release. And while you're at it, hold onto your issues. The reason we run all those Japanese TV listings in Anime Land? So you can compile your own episode guides when these series finally come Stateside. Bonus!

## Should you subscribe?

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## Tell us what you think!

Wanna help make *Newtype USA* even better? Of course you do! Tell us your favorite features, sections and stories. Tell us what you want to see more of. Heck, you can even tell us what you *don't* like—we'll be OK. Send your emails to letters@newtype-usa.com, and we'll read each and every one of them. Check out our website (www.newtype-usa.com) for all kinds of interactive polls about the issue that's in your hands. This is your magazine too, so we want to hear from you!

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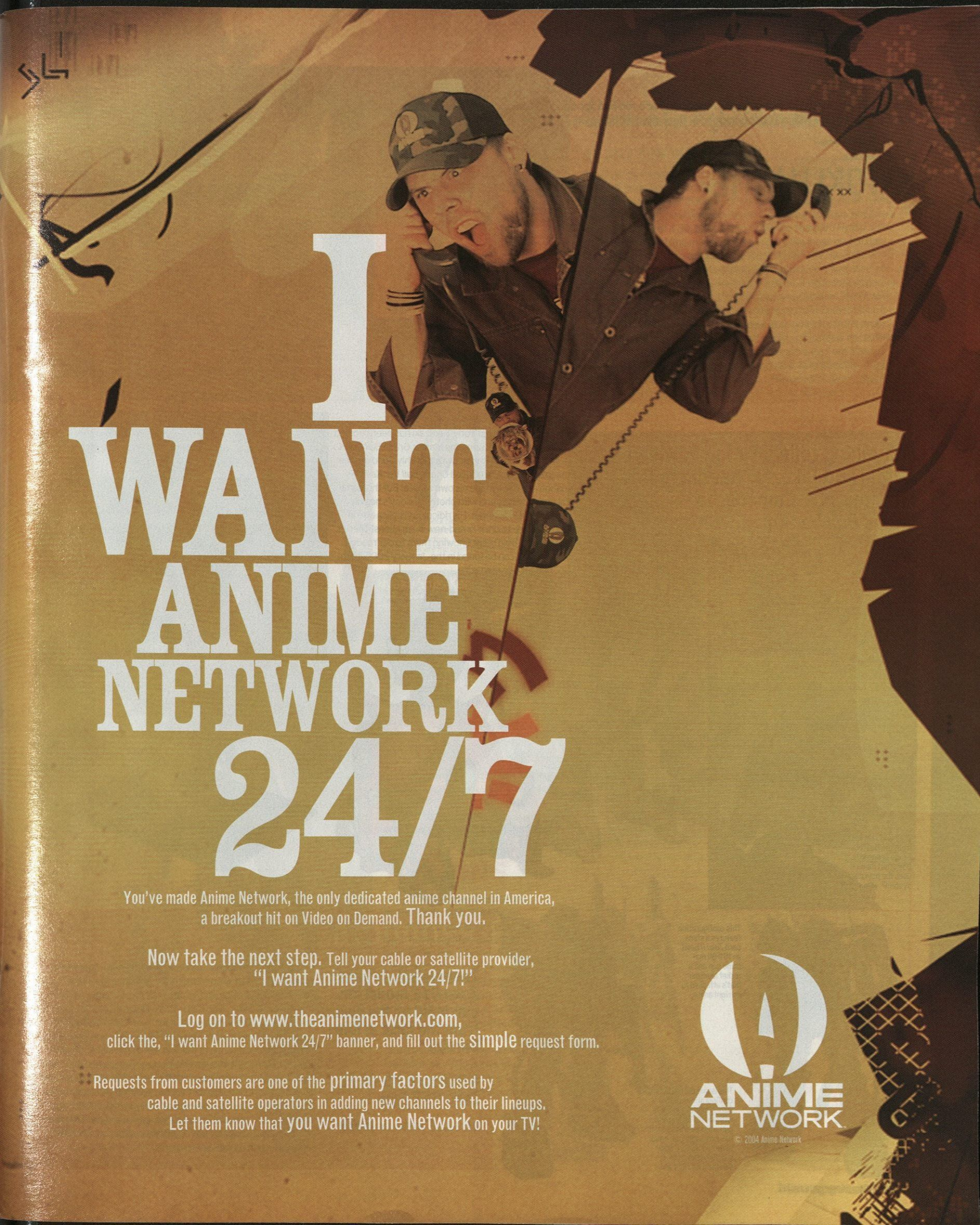
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This month we present an eye-popping replica of Char's red *Ball Ver.Ka*, designed by Tony Takezaki. We also have one of the most recent Gundam Fix Figuration installments—the *Hyaku Shiki*!

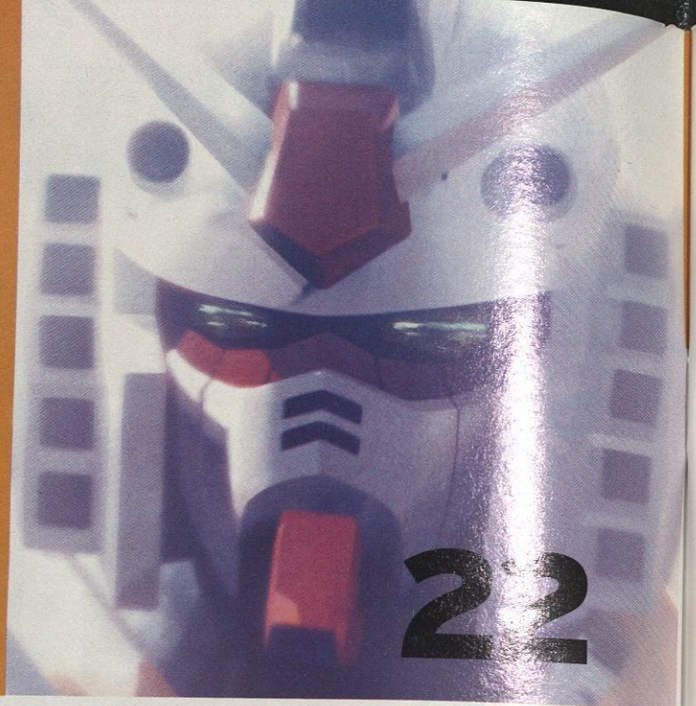
text by KOTARO HAYASHI
shot by TAKASE PHOTO OFFICE / ENTANIYA

Newtype USA

# KATOKI HAJIME

カトキハジメ デザイン アンド プロダクツ

# DESIGNS & PRODUCTS



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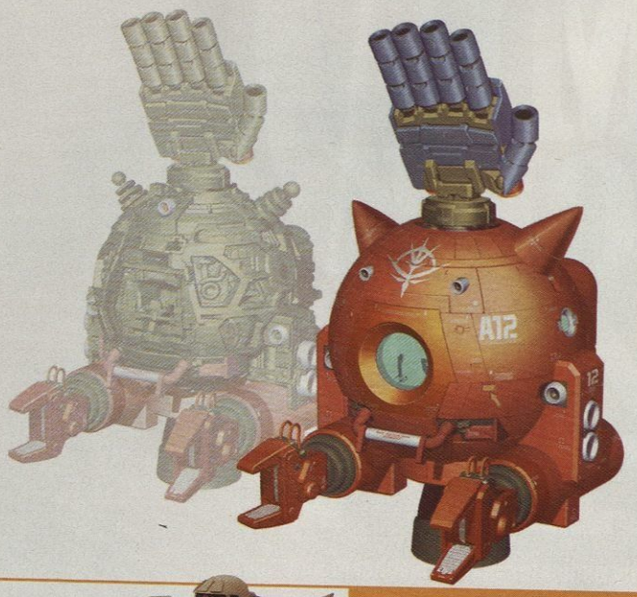
## DESIGNS

### A stunning collaboration between Katoki and Takezaki has led to this hilarious phantom mecha—Char's *Ball Ver.Ka*!

Popular manga artist Tony Takezaki has been running a manga series featuring the Master Grade *Ball Ver.Ka* (Katoki version) in Kadokawa's monthly *Gundam Ace* magazine. Tony introduced Char's *Ball Ver.Ka* in his manga and even made his own replica! But this comical project didn't end with photos of Tony's heavily modified *Ball* model kit. His ridiculous replica also inspired Katoki to draw brand-new illustrations! There's no way we could resist showing them to our readers. More details can be found in the January 2005 issue of *Gundam Ace* magazine.

Inside the cockpit is Char Aznable with his head hung low. Even the proud "Red Comet" can feel blue at times.

The hand was taken from the Master Grade *Zeong* kit. Does that mean it uses the psycommu system?



This is Tony's custom-built model. The realistically designed manipulators of the original kit were trimmed mercilessly short.

This configuration features a standard *Zaku II* head, an MMP80 machine gun and a rocket launcher that's attached to its right ankle.

This is one of the custom configurations of the *Zaku II* model, equipped with an MMP80 machine gun and a panzerfaust. It has extra appliqué armor plates on its forehead, but it's missing the shield on its right arm.

## PRODUCTS

### Zeonography's latest *Zaku II F2* model lets you build all the *Zakus* from the base at Kimbareid!

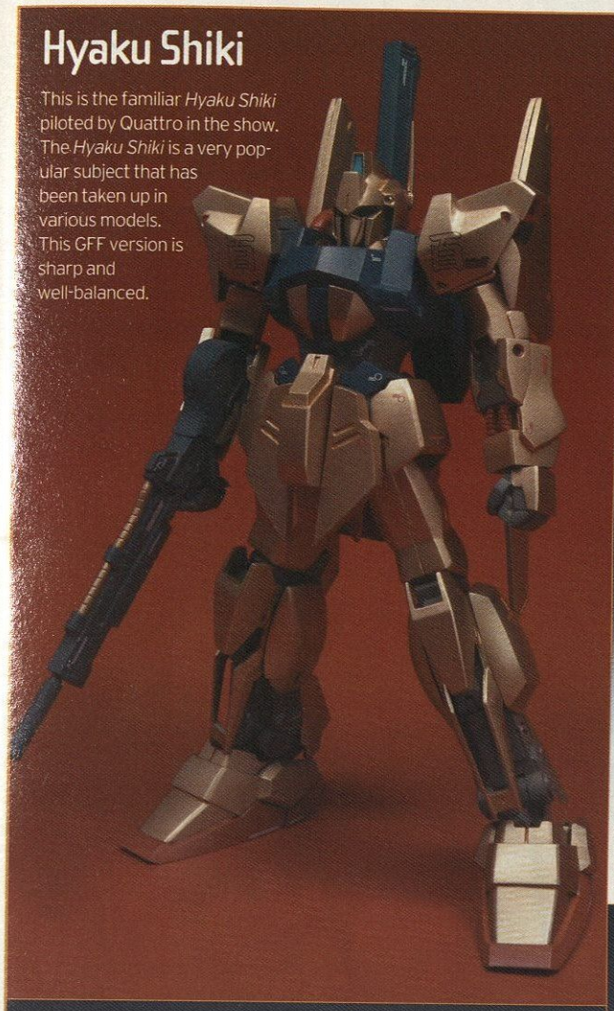
**#3005a/b MS-06 F2 Zaku II F2 type**

**ON SALE NOW IN JAPAN**

Episode 4 of the ***Mobile Suit Gundam 0083 Stardust Memory*** OVA series showed a breathtaking combat scene between the Federation and some of the former Zeon soldiers led by Neuen Bitter, who helped his comrade Gato flee into space using an HLV (heavy-lift launch vehicle). The *Gundam GP02A* that Gato stole from a Federation base was onboard. In this climactic episode of the first half of the series, six *Zaku F2s* bravely fought a tough battle and accomplished their mission. The actual Zeonography #3005 a/b *Zaku F2* models are available in green and desert yellow, allowing you to swap some parts around to represent all *Zaku* variations that appeared in the memorable battle. You can even patch together a hybrid *Zaku* using two kits of different colors, just like the pre-production models shown here.

## Hyaku Shiki

This is the familiar *Hyaku Shiki* piloted by Quattro in the show. The *Hyaku Shiki* is a very popular subject that has been taken up in various models. This GFF version is sharp and well-balanced.



The clay bazooka can be detached from the backpack. Wing binders are standard features on the *Hyaku Shiki*.

The whole backpack can be swapped out to represent the full armor version, as shown in this picture. The two pieces sticking out toward the rear are the beam cannon housings. The barrels swing forward when firing.

## Hyaku Shiki Kai (mass-production version)

Although the mass-production version of the *Hyaku Shiki Kai* was developed after the *Hyaku Shiki Kai*, it's similar to the original. The Gatling gun on its right shoulder easily distinguishes the mass-production version from the others.

## Hyaku Shiki Kai

The *Hyaku Shiki Kai* is an evolved version of the original *Hyaku Shiki*. The *Kai's* head and shoulders are noticeably different from the original *Hyaku Shiki's*, but don't overlook subtle differences like the sharper and more complex legs. The overall proportions of the *Kai* are also leaner than the original *Hyaku Shiki*.

# PRODUCTS

## Gundam Fix Figuration #0023

**HYAKU SHIKI**

**ON SALE NOW IN JAPAN**

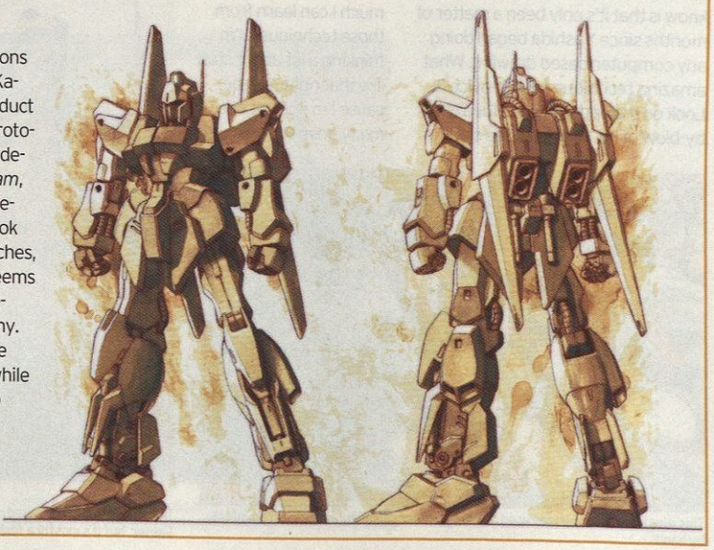
If you can name every *Hyaku Shiki* variation shown here, you're a diehard *Hyaku Shiki* aficionado (and you might want to seek professional help). December 2004's GFF release was the *Hyaku Shiki* (which means "type 100"), and the model is configurable in not two, not three, but *four* variations! It can be built into either the standard *Hyaku Shiki*, the *Hyaku Shiki Kai* (the modified *Hyaku Shiki*), the mass-production *Hyaku Shiki Kai* and the full armor *Hyaku Shiki Kai*. The *Hyaku Shiki* originally appeared in the ***Zeta Gundam*** TV series—and was used exclusively by Quattro Bajeena (aka Char Aznable). It appeared as part of the Gundam team in ***Gundam ZZ*** as well. In ***Zeta Gundam***, the *Hyaku Shiki* was one of the prototypes developed during the Zeta Project. It was initially designed to be transformable, but some structural problems resulted in this non-transformable mobile suit instead. Because of its superior performance, a few variations were created, but none of them was actually used in combat. Although the ***Zeta Gundam*** TV series ended a long time ago, the *Hyaku Shiki* has remained very popular with fans for its gaudy but highly distinctive color scheme.

## Hyaku Shiki Kai (full armor version)

The full armor version of the *Hyaku Shiki Kai* has appeared in various ***Gundam*** games. The extra weapons include two beam cannons, a mega particle cannon, two integrated stun-guns and a long mega buster gun.

# DESIGNS

Here are the all-new illustrations for the *Hyaku Shiki* done by Katoki, producer of the GFF product line. The *Hyaku Shiki* was a prototype mobile suit used for the development of the *Zeta Gundam*, so they share some design elements. GFF figures tend to look lankier than the original sketches, but this *Hyaku Shiki* model seems to have less GFF influence because the suit is already skinny. The front view showcases the suit's boldly defiant stance, while the rear view shows its sharp wing binders.



# Kenichi Yoshida

## FINDING CALM IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS

An illustration from the calendar supplement that appeared in the January 2005 issue of *Newtype* Japan. The oil-finished look is so authentic that it's hard to believe it was done on a computer.

The title of this picture is "Ame," which means *rain* in Japanese. The illustration is from the fourth installment of ***Shangri-La***.

An illustration from the first installment of ***Shangri-La***. The picture is completely hand-drawn and was painted directly onto the canvas.

**THIS MONTH** we're spotlighting the methods and works of Kenichi Yoshida. He does the fantastic illustrations for the serial novel ***Shangri-La***, written by Eiichi Ikegami and appearing monthly in *Newtype* Japan. For the January 2005 issue of *Newtype*, he contributed a calendar illustration that we'll delve into later on. But first let's hear about how Yoshida crafts his illustrations.

"***Shangri-La*** was my first opportunity to do insert illustrations for a novel. Initially I used marker, but along the way I switched to doing the drawings on my computer," he remarks. The illustrations certainly don't look like CG, but what you don't know is that it's only been a matter of months since Yoshida began doing any computer-based drawing. What amazing technique for a "novice"! Look on the opposite page for a blow-by-blow of his highly unique computer illustration process.

"At the moment, drawing with marker is still faster for me," admits Yoshida. "Especially if I'm short on time. Computers are more convenient, but when you start building up your drawing on screen, you realize there's no limit to what you can do, and that can be a problem! [laughs] There's a big difference between animation and illustrations in terms of the work you do. A stand-alone illustration has to have depth and tell a story on its own. I suppose the same is true of animation, but there are many special techniques to help boost the appeal of stand-alone illustrations, and I feel there's much I can learn from those techniques. I'm thinking a lot about stuff like that right now because I'm not just one of many animators. I'm in a position to add a form of commentary to the content."

Yoshida is speaking about his latest gig—character designer for the TV anime ***EUREKA SEVEN***, which will begin airing in Japan this spring. At the moment he's right in the thick of this new project, but he's still working enthusiastically on the illustrations for *Newtype*'s serial novel.

"While I don't have plans to take on more illustration work right now, I'm really enjoying working on ***Shangri-La***. I think it's an interesting project, and I'm giving 110% on it. One of my favorite artists is Hiroshi Yoshida [a famous Japanese woodblock artist from the early 20th century], and I think you can see some of his influence in the backgrounds and layouts I use in the insert illustrations for the novel."

Impressed with Yoshida's crisp lines and lush colors? Pick up a current copy of *Newtype* Japan and luxuriate in his recent labors of love.

An early board for ***King Gainer***. The [illegible] of the drawing is "Golame."

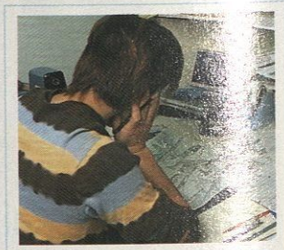
This illustration, which was used in a ***King Gainer*** calendar, was drawn completely by hand!

This image is loosely based on ***Overman King Gainer***, but it's mostly a Yoshida original.

An illustration from the fifth installment of ***Shangri-La***. Turn this picture clockwise 90 degrees...do you see a staircase?

### >> TOOLS & MATERIALS

Paper, mechanical pencils, erasers, [illegible]ner, tablet, PowerMac G4, Photoshop [illegible]



Kenichi Yoshida was born November [illegible] 1969 in Kumamoto, Japan. Yoshida joined Studio Ghibli soon after graduating from vocational school, starting as an in-between animator on ***Omoide Poro Poro*** (also known as ***Only Yesterday***) and moving on to key animation starting with the production of ***Porco Rosso***. He's currently doing freelance work.

text by YUKIO KINO shot by YUTAKA TAKAYAMA

## STEP BY STEP

### 1. Scan in your rough drawing

Do a rough sketch in pencil—this will be your line drawing when you scan it in. Don't try to make perfect, uniform lines. Bring out the roughness of the scene with bold shading and texture.

### 2. Copy and multiply layers

Copy the line layer and place the copy on top of the original in multiply mode. This brings more focus and contrast to the lines. Adjust the transparency to keep the image from getting too dark.

### 3. Shade to enhance depth

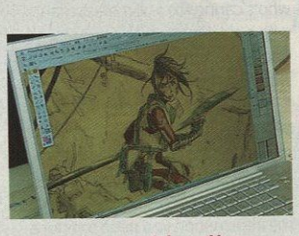
Make a new layer for the foreground elements and shade using the pencil tool. The key is doing many strokes with a faint brush. Blur the edges to enhance the sensation of distance.

### 4. Fill the image with yellow

Create a new screen layer and fill with yellow. Make the blending mode multiply, and adjust the transparency and fill parameters to get a faded yellowish hue, like a faint light in the darkness.

### 5. Shave off the reflective surfaces

Cut out portions of the shading where the light in the image hits, giving the colors a sense of translucency. Use layer arrangements or insert your own highlights by hand if needed.



### 6. Depth considerations when coloring

Instead of open space, use saturation and hue to give the image depth. To deepen the perspective in a yellow-based image, use red shades in the foreground and blue/green in the background.

### 7. Making it look like marker

Insert new layers for adding color detail between the background layer and the yellow-filled layer above. Draw by hand using a coarse, marker-like pencil tool, adjusting the color as needed.

### 8. Combine layers and fine-tune

Merge the layers in order of fixity of objects. Make some copy layers in overlay mode to fine-tune the color of the picture as a whole, bringing it closer to the image you had in mind.

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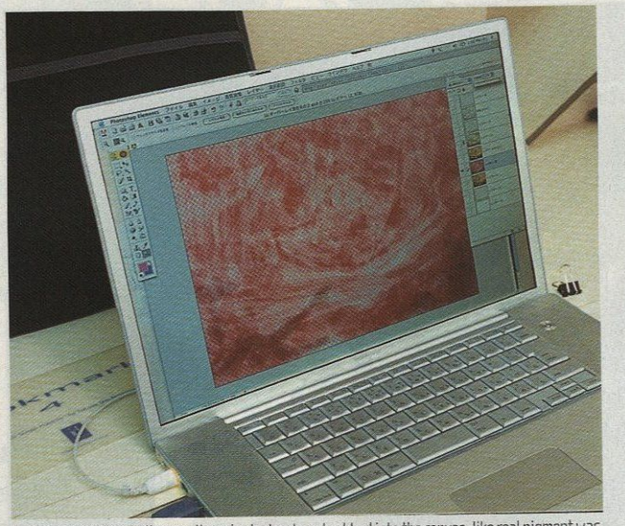
# Nicking the knack

## UNIQUE DRAWING TECHNIQUES FOR DYNAMIC LAYOUTS

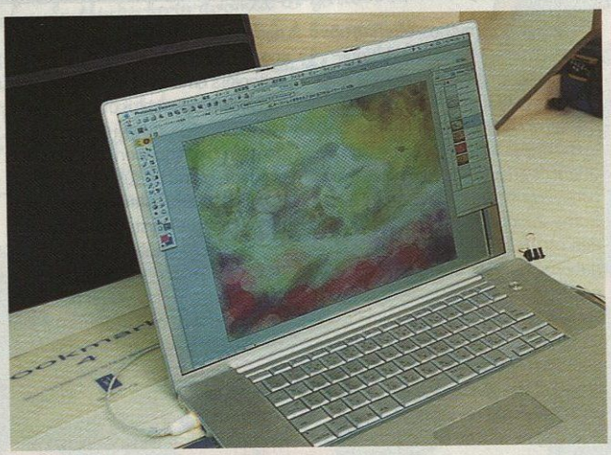


Pay close attention to the way the color looks almost rubbed into the canvas, like real pigment was used. Also notice how the careful arrangement of light and dark areas adds depth and a sense of openness to the layout.

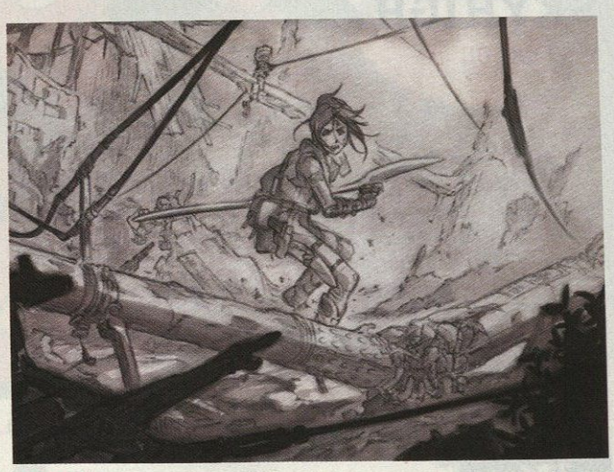
**YOSHIDA DEVELOPED HIS** technique using a combination of his own insight and inspiration from many other painters and artists. This technique is widely applicable, so pay attention!

One of the most noteworthy aspects of Yoshida's coloring is the way he uses subtle effects of hue and saturation to increase the richness of texture and substance in the drawing. Furthermore, he enhances the impression of depth and distance by adding color overlays for foreground and background objects. The colors are selected to contrast with the main tone of the image.

To achieve the desired effect, Yoshida creates colored patterns in separate layers and uses them as texture layers. To avoid uniformity of tone, he adds noise and randomness to the patterns, but that doesn't mean he creates the patterns arbitrarily. Each one is done (by hand using a brush tool!) to match the line drawing in some way. The trick is keeping the strokes spontaneous and not overdoing them. And remember to keep the regions that will contain illuminated characters as noise-free as possible. Use the translucency of the colors to create the halo effects you want. As long as you pay attention to which colors are on both sides of the spectrum from the base color, you should have no trouble finding many different applications for this technique.



**Point #1** This is a "color noise" pattern Yoshida made using the brush tool. You can clearly see how the colors have been chosen to create a color "depression" in the center of the image.



**Point #2** Distance and spatial relations are facilitated by choosing colors for the background and foreground that differ in hue from the yellow-brown color of the light that fills the image.

# Boogiepop and Others

## SCHOOL SPIRITS

**CULT-CLASSIC** *Boogiepop Phantom* is one of the darkest and most mysterious anime series released in the US to date. Even as it ends, it's obvious that there's much more to the story. Does the live-action ***Boogiepop and Others*** reveal it all? Not exactly, but it does delve deeply into the Boogiepop mythos, offering up a very different—and fascinating—look at this enigmatic character and the events that engulf her.

Shinyo Academy is a high school in the grips of a subtle terror. One by one, kids are disappearing. Are they runaways, or have they been killed? Some students take up secret identities, others begin clandestine investigations, while still others gain terrible powers. In a style that seems to lie somewhere between the anime's character vignettes and ***Memento's*** back-to-front storytelling, bits and pieces of the mystery of ***Boogiepop and Others*** are revealed.

It begins with an earnest student named Keiji Takeda. Rumors are flying that all of the missing high schoolers have been killed by a "shinigami"—or spirit of death—called Boogiepop. Keiji suddenly notices a robed figure on the school grounds, correctly suspects that it's Boogiepop, and confronts her. From there, the true mystery draws in around the students.

As the film progresses, each of the characters—no matter how insignificant their role in the larger plot may be—gets time in the spotlight. As you get to know each person, you uncover another piece of the puzzle. The major players include Nagi Kirima (who's also in the anime), an aspiring investigator looking into the disappearances; Naoko Kamikishiro, who's caring for a homeless man with a startling secret; and Masami Saotome...something's just not right with him.

At times, ***Boogiepop and Others*** is challenging to watch. Like the anime, the film's pacing can seem languid and, occasionally, confusing. Until the very end, you don't have all the information you need to figure things out. But as fans of the series already know, that's part of the pleasure. ***Boogiepop and Others*** may follow many of the same characters and explore similar situations to the ***Boogiepop Phantom*** anime, but rather than mesh everything together, they complement one another and stand separately—two sides of the same coin.

*—Christian Nutt*

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005
**PUBLISHER**
The Right Stuf International
**RUNNING TIME**
158 min.
**RATING**
13+

### >> BOOGIEPOP'S LIBRARY

The ***Boogiepop*** saga didn't begin with the anime or the movie. It didn't spring from a manga, either. Instead, the ***Boogiepop*** legend was born in 1998 when author Kouhei Kadono released the novel ***Boogiepop and Others***, which forms the basis for this film. More than ten ***Boogiepop*** books have since been released in Japan.

©2000 Kouhei Kadono/Media Works/Hakuhodo/Toei Video

# SKYHIGH

## HIGH ON YOU

**IF YOU AREN'T** familiar with Ryuhei Kitamura, you probably will be soon. His first film, ***Versus***, became an instant cult classic on the indie film circuit, and since then he's gone on to create some of Japan's biggest blockbusters. In 2003's ***SKYHIGH***, Kitamura deftly displayed his knack for highly stylized action, dramatic horror and over-the-top supernatural themes.

Based on the manga of the same name, ***SKYHIGH*** follows the story of Mina (Yumiko Shaku), a bride-to-be who has her heart ripped out by a serial killer on her wedding day. Upon her untimely demise, she's given the choice to seek revenge on her killer, enter heaven or ultimately become the guardian of The Gate of Malice (a portal to the afterlife). Back on Earth, Mina's beloved, a police detective named Kanzaki, hunts down her killer. His thirst for vengeance leads him directly into the killer's web of black magic and human sacrifice. Kanzaki's love for Mina is soon tested in ways no person should have to endure.

If you adored ***Versus*** or are simply looking for a window into Kitamura's films, this is the perfect purchase. A vibrant, hyperkinetic and exceedingly stylish film, Kitamura's ***SKYHIGH*** lives up to the hype.

*—Justin Kovalsky*

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005
**PUBLISHER**
Media Blasters
**RUNNING TIME**
122 min.
**RATING**
18+

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# MIDORI DAYS

♥1: a helping hand

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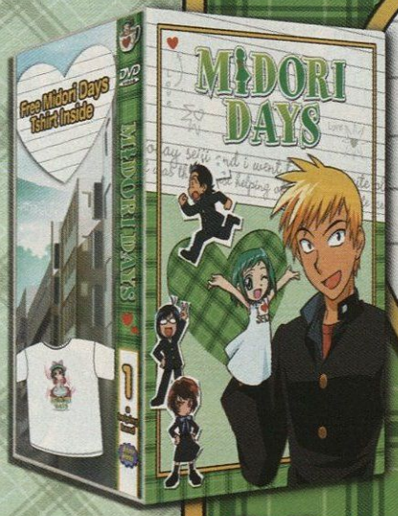


Seiji "Mad Dog" Sawamura is the ultimate high-school punk. With his super-strong, invincible right hand, he can punch through cement walls and lay waste to entire street gangs. But street cred comes with a high price - every girl in the school is absolutely terrified of him! Just when he thinks he is doomed to forever date imaginary girlfriends, Seiji's right hand becomes an actual girl! Midori Kasunago wished she could be by Seiji's side...but ended up somehow attached to his wrist. Seiji's fighting days may be over, but his girl-trouble days are about to begin!!

**Midori Days:**
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**STREET: 3/29/2005**
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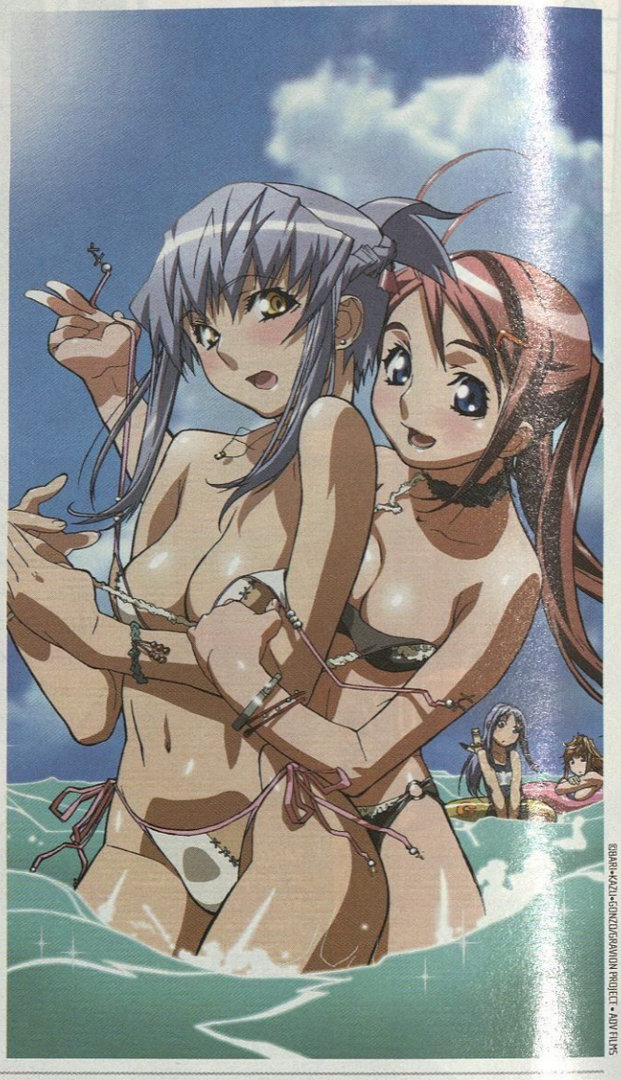
# Gravion Zwei VOLUME 1

## MECHA MAIDENS RIDE AGAIN



**IN THE ORIGINAL** *Gravion*, adorably exaggerated girls in maid uniforms helm one of the coolest combining robots since *Voltron*. Their mission: take down evil aliens called the Zeravire and save Earth. In ***Gravion Zwei***, the mission's much the same, but everything's amplified—from the chest measurements of head maid Mizuki to the sheer number of teen heroes and mecha. The show takes the formula of its source genre and revels in dealing double scoops of what fans desire most, concentrating it into a potent package that has guilty pleasure written all over it.

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005
**PUBLISHER**
ADV Films
**RUNNING TIME**
100 min.
**RATING**
TV-MA

***Zwei's*** plot picks up with the return of the Zeravire. (No, you just can't keep evil aliens down.) But this time, mass-produced versions of the *Gravion* robot are there to greet them, and a new team of teen pilots called the G-Soldiers, led by the cute Faye Xin Lu, is hired to pilot the new 'bots. When the freshman class barely comes out of their first battle alive, the combat-worn seniors from the first series return to deal more carnage. The bespectacled Ena, the spunky Luna, melancholy little Leelee, teen prodigy Toga and our token anime protagonist Eiji are officially back in action.

As things progress, we're offered new insights into the characters and some of the first series' unsolved mysteries. You'll find yourself questioning the origins of the Zeravire and their connection to Eiji's missing sister. These serious moments are balanced out by the show's lighthearted vibe. For example, in the second episode, the maids and the guys from the first series all go on a picnic. The girls drink a bit too much saké and unleash a blinding flurry of fan service as they flirt with Toga, Eiji and Sandman's masked assistant Raven. Moments like these have made the ***Gravion*** series into a comical and fun romp, a rich blend of sexiness and major mecha action.

*—Justin Kovalsky*

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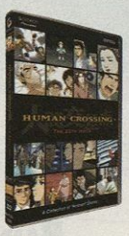
# Human Crossing VOLUME 1

## LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

***HUMAN CROSSING* IS** a surprisingly powerful slice-of-life anime offering four short stories about the struggles people face in everyday life. While each tale has the potential to touch the hardest of hearts, my favorite of the bunch, oddly enough, features a tough-as-nails boxer. This pugilist is one of the most popular pros in Japan, and he has everything money can buy: cars, attention from opportunistic ladies and an army of superficial friends. But he's plagued by a painful childhood, having grown up with an abusive alcoholic mother who left him with a nasty scar. His journey toward the realization that his past shouldn't prevent his happiness is both compelling and inspirational. The other stories are equally well-written and smoothly animated, and as I watched them play out, I frequently wondered why our homegrown cable TV shows are rarely so thoughtful and intelligent.

*—Jennifer M. Contino*



**AVAILABLE**
Now
**PUBLISHER**
Geneon Entertainment
**RUNNING TIME**
100 min.
**RATING**
16+

©Hosaki Yojiro, Kenshi Hirokane/Shogakukan ©2003,2005 Project Human Crossing

# Shingu: Secret of the Stellar Wars

VOLUME 1

ALIENS AMONG US

**IT'S NOT *QUITE*** traditional sci-fi, not *completely* a high school slice-of-life comedy, and it's not *totally* an anime version of ***The X-Files***. ***Shingu*** is a satisfying combination of all three, done with a calm, almost lackadaisical pacing that separates it from other anime shows that borrow from those genres.

We follow Hajime Murata, a normal, likeable high school student who moved from Tokyo to the suburban city of Tenmo. Unbeknownst to him and his family, the city is a haven for beings from other planets (some of whom have telekinetic powers). When alien transfer student Muryou Subaru arrives at school, things get a little out of hand, and Hajime ends up finding out all about the extraterrestrial beings, the Galaxy Federation and an Earth-defending giant called Shingu. While all of this is going on, Hajime and his friends try to maintain the appearance of a somewhat normal school life, planning festivals, developing crushes on one another, etc. There's also an interesting subplot about a mysterious guy in a trench coat doing reconnaissance work on Hajime and the people of Tenmo for a presumably hostile alien force.

What really sets ***Shingu*** apart from the rest is that it doesn't rely on wacky slapstick or loads of fan service. Its characters and situations are refreshingly straightforward, and its futuristic 2070 setting allows for some subtle humor, the most noticeable example of which is the fact that the Japanese students don't wear uniforms anymore (and since Muryou does, he's "odd"). ***Shingu's*** got true sleeper-hit potential.

*—Chris Johnston*

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005

**PUBLISHER**
The Right Stuf International

**RUNNING TIME**
125 min.

**RATING**
7+

©2004 Saito Tatsuo / Nashouse / Team HIJIRITOU

### >> BEHIND THE MUSIC

***Shingu*** has an old-school, jazzy musical vibe, not unlike that of the ***Lupin III*** series. And it's no coincidence; composer Yuji Ohno (brother of John Lennon widow Yoko Ono) scored a majority of the ***Lupin*** series in addition to ***Shingu***.

# Shrine of the Morning Mist VOLUME 1

SWEET SOUL SISTERS

**>>JUST BECAUSE THE** priestesses in ***Shrine of the Morning Mist*** are cute doesn't mean they can't kick a whole lot of demon booty. Our story follows Yuzu and her pack of magical friends as they protect Tadahiro, one of Yuzu's childhood friends who moves into the shrine with her family. Tadahiro has a special ability (though he doesn't know how to tap into it) that allows him to see into the spirit world, talk to gods and use their power. That makes him number one on the demon king Yagarena's most-wanted list. >> Yuzu is more than capable of protecting him at the beginning, foiling Yagarena's attacks at every turn (sometimes unknowingly). But the real fun comes as Yuzu recruits other girls from school to join her priestess club and help out, teaching them how to awaken their abilities and channel spirit powers. Once the girls get the hang of it, they're able to call up energy that destroys demon foes almost on contact. The ten 12-minute episodes on this disc have enough cute, funny moments of magical-girl mayhem and mystical intrigue to keep viewers coming back for more.

*—Jennifer M. Contino*

**AVAILABLE**
Now

**PUBLISHER**
Media Blasters

**RUNNING TIME**
125 min.

**RATING**
13+

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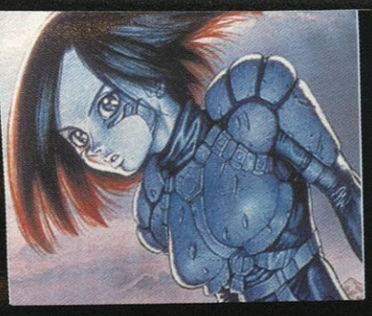

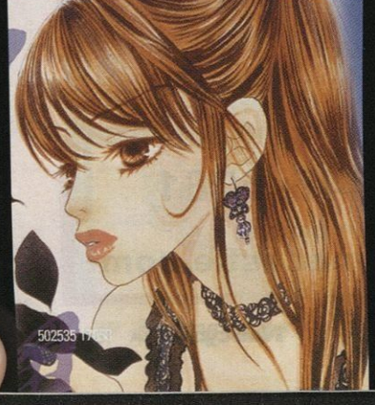

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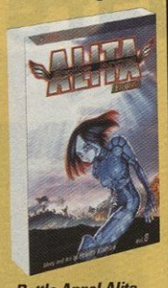
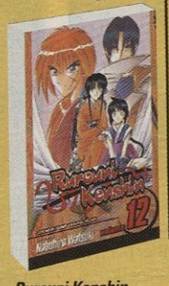



*Battle Angel Alita Vol. 8*

*Case Closed Vol. 4*

*Happy Hustle High Vol. 1*




*Rurouni Kenshin Vol. 12*

*Yu-Gi-Oh! Duelist Vol. 2*

## coming in march

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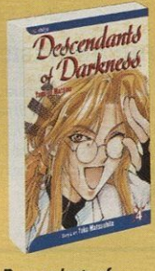
*Imadoki! Nowadays Vol. 5*

Available March 14




*Descendants of Darkness Vol. 4*

Available March 14

*Doubt!! Vol. 1*

Available March 14

*Excel Saga Vol. 11*

Available March 21

*Kare First Love Vol. 3*

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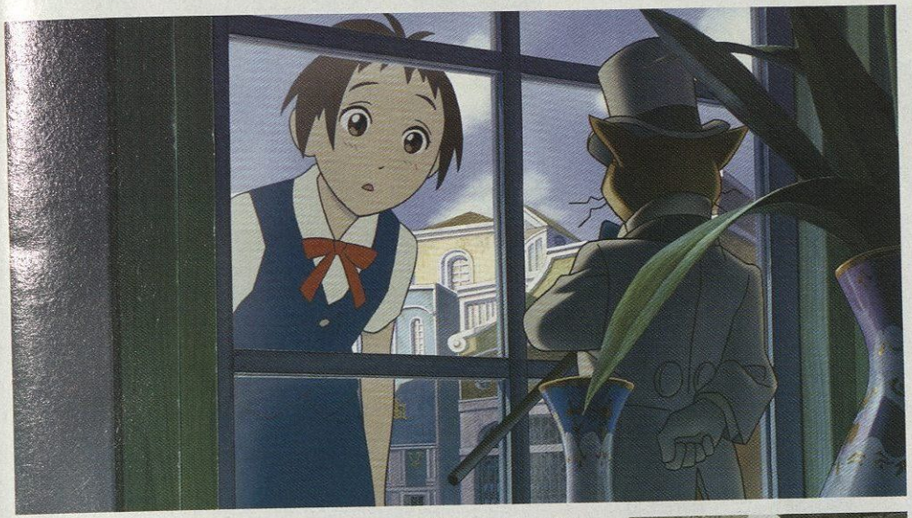
# The Cat Returns

## THE SECRET LIVES OF CATS



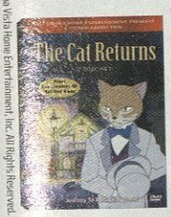
**AFTER WATCHING** *The Cat Returns*, it's hard not to believe that cats have secret lives. You can see it in their shifty little eyes...there's something going on when you're not watching. Perhaps they even walk upright and speak the Queen's English perfectly, hmm?

*The Cat Returns* is a whimsically wonderful modern-day fairy tale from Studio Ghibli in which an average teenage girl named Haru stumbles upon a secret world after she saves a cat prince from becoming roadkill. Her bravery is rewarded by a startling amount of unwanted generosity—the Cat King showers her with lavish gifts fit for a cat, such as a yard full of cattails, pockets filled with catnip and a locker stuffed with live mice. It seems less like a thank you and more like torture. When she tells one of the cat king's servants that the gifts are unsatisfactory, it only gets *worse*, and arrangements are made for her to marry the cat prince. To put a stop to that, she follows the advice of a disembodied voice and seeks the help of the Cat Bureau and its charismatic Baron. But before they can act on anything, she's whisked away to the cat kingdom and forced into the wedding. Will she be able to escape the world of cats in time to prevent becoming one herself?

The film captures the spirit of what's made many of Studio Ghibli's films so good—it's got a great story, amazing animation and a catchy soundtrack. But what's more surprising is that it wasn't directed by Ghibli regulars Hayao Miyazaki or Isao Takahata. Newcomer Hiroyuki Morita takes over those duties, directing a tight story that's comedic, poignant and filled with wonderfully realized characters. All of those great personalities are brought to life in English by a stellar dub cast, including standout performances by Anne Hathaway as Haru, Cary Elwes as The Baron and Andy Richter as the Cat King's servant Natoru.

As with any Studio Ghibli film, *The Cat Returns* demands to be a part of your anime DVD collection and enjoyed with family and friends, no matter what language you choose to watch it in.

*—Chris Johnston*




**AVAILABLE** February 2005
**PUBLISHER** Buena Vista Home Entertainment
**RUNNING TIME** 75 min.
**RATING** G

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### >> RETURN TRIP

Both the Baron and Muta are returning characters from 1995's ***Whisper of the Heart***, a Studio Ghibli film that has yet to be released on DVD in the US. In it, main character Shizuku Tsukishima endeavors to become a writer. The idea behind ***The Cat Returns*** is that it's one of the stories the young girl wrote. But you don't need to have seen ***Whisper*** to enjoy ***The Cat Returns***.

# A Tree of Palme

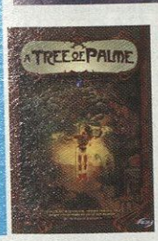
## NO STRINGS ATTACHED

***A TREE OF PALME*** has been described as a Japanese retelling of the classic ***Pinocchio*** story. However, when ***Palme's*** interpretation of the Blue Fairy decapitates a guy within the first few minutes of the film, you realize that this ain't the ***Pinocchio*** Uncle Walt wanted you to see.

The puppet (he's more of a robot, really—this *is* anime, after all), Palme, was created by a botanist named Fou to care for his ailing wife, Xian, who teaches Palme about the human heart and soul. Upon the woman's death, Palme becomes inert until a wounded female warrior appears and gives Fou the "Egg of Touto," which must be delivered to a legendary underground city. Thus begins Palme's journey and his quest to find purpose in life.

***Palme*** is written and directed by Takashi Nakamura, whose previous work includes ***Nausicaä***, ***Akira*** and the anthology film ***Robot Carnival***. The film benefits from Nakamura's unique character designs, wondrous techno-organic creations and a somber, surreal tone. Despite its occasionally plodding pace, ***Palme*** is an excellent film that puts a new spin on a classic tale.

*—Phil Theobald*




**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** AOV Films
**RUNNING TIME** 136 min.
**RATING** TV-14

© 2001 Takashi Nakamura • GENLOPALPE Production Committee

# Gantz VOLUMES 1 & 2

## JUST SHOOT THEM

**YOU MAY HAVE** heard that *Gantz* is full of graphic violence, coarse language, nudity and gallons of gore; that it was "too hot" for Japanese TV, with full episodes worth of content cut from the show's original broadcast. All of that is true. But it's not just doing it for the shock value—the sudden and extreme game that our main characters find themselves forced to play is the catalyst for the main theme of the show: How do humans react when suddenly put under the most extreme of conditions and ordered to do something that is against every fiber of their being? And then if they get to go back to their normal lives, how will that traumatic experience affect them?

When you fire up the first volume of *Gantz*, it's as jarring for the viewer as it is for our main characters. You watch helplessly as Kei Kurono and his buddy Kato get run over (and mutilated) by a train during their valiant attempt to save a drunken vagrant who has fallen onto the tracks. Only...they don't exactly die. Instead, they're whisked away to an apartment filled with other recently deceased people and ordered by a large black sphere called Gantz to play a game. Participation isn't optional, and Kei and Kato soon find themselves (along with a well-endowed gal pal named Kei Kishimoto) competing in a twisted olympiad of kill or be killed.

**AVAILABLE**
Now (V.1), March 2005 (V.2)
**PUBLISHER**
ADV Films
**RUNNING TIME**
50 min. each
**RATING**
TV-MA

© 2004 Hiroya Oku / SHUEISHA • GANTZ Partners

As the first two episodes play out, you see how the others in the group react to their first mission—killing two aliens. Some choose to believe it's just a dream, while others fearlessly attempt to take out their assigned targets. But with only one life to give in each round and one particularly strong alien opponent, success is not a sure thing. The second volume continues the action of their first "game," and in a rather exciting turn during the third episode, Kurono accepts his newfound reality, and, as his past flashes before him, he applies the trials and hardships he's endured in real life to the game. It's a stylish and vivid sequence that only makes you want to know more about these characters.

Like *The Matrix* and *Ghost in the Shell* before it, *Gantz* pulls no punches when it comes to screwing with your head. GONZO gives the show its unique visual punch—a two-hit combo of traditional animation and 3D CG that results in a very game-like look. Its hard edge may be too much for some viewers, but I can't take my eyes off this show.

*—Chris Johnston*

### >> ONLY A GAME

If you think *Gantz* would make a perfect video game, well, you're not alone. Game publisher Konami is currently scheduled to release a PS2 *Gantz* game in Japan this month. No word yet on whether or not this third-person action title will make it to American shores.

## >> LAST LOOKS

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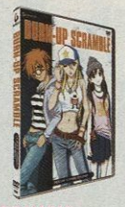
# Burn-Up Scramble VOLUME 3



**AVAILABLE**
March 2005
**PUBLISHER**
Geneon Entertainment
**RUNNING TIME**
100 min.
**RATING**
16+

**THE LAMPOON OF** girls-with-guns anime continues in this final volume of *Burn-Up Scramble*. If you've made it this far, you've already fallen hard for the girls of the elite police force called the Warriors. After all, there's something for just about every fan of action and fan service in martial arts master Rio, super-sniper Maya and their psychic-powered prisoner turned reluctant partner Lilica.

In this volume, the girls are sent to capture a Chinese crime boss on a luxury cruise ship. A deluge of sexy and hysterical gags is followed by a satisfying showdown that culminates in some of the series' hallmark mass destruction. But a dollop of real drama comes later on when the Warriors break up and are replaced by a new team. Will our fabulous femme fatales survive these rocky times to see another day?

*—Justin Kovalsky*

Original Japanese version ©1993, 2000 Tezuka Production/Black Jack Committee. English version ©2004 Tezuka Production/Black Jack Committee. All rights reserved.

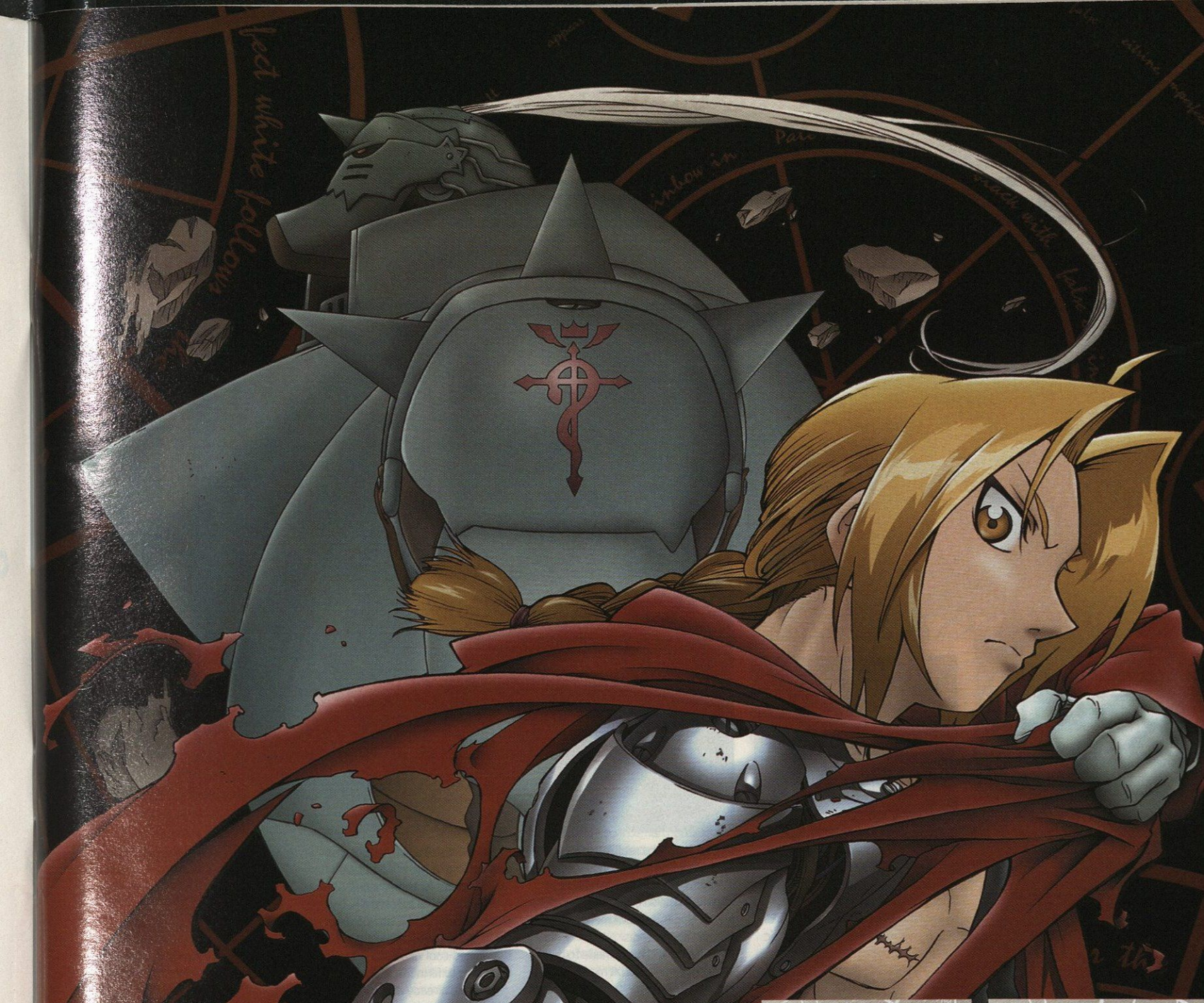
# Black Jack: Biohazard

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005
**PUBLISHER**
Central Park Media
**RUNNING TIME**
50 min.
**RATING**
13+

**OSAMU TEZUKA'S** *Black Jack* never ceases to surprise me. Combining super science fiction with real-life medical minutiae, *Black Jack* is the tale of a renegade surgeon-for-hire who can cure any ailment. In this excellent OVA series, every standalone disc provides the eponymous doctor with a new patient to heal—each one more bizarre than the last.

Though it seemed unlikely that the creators could top themselves in this final volume, they've done it again. When an epidemic in a seaside town is brought on by industrial waste in the water, one young woman starts to transform into a mermaid. This mystery is one of the most compelling of the series, with a conclusion so strange that the story's environmental message never feels too preachy.

*—Justin Kovalsky*



"Entertaining, heart-breaking & thought-provoking. One of—if not the—greatest anime ever."
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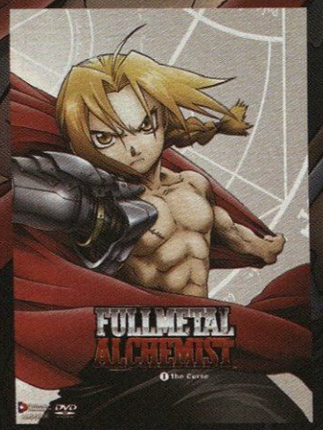


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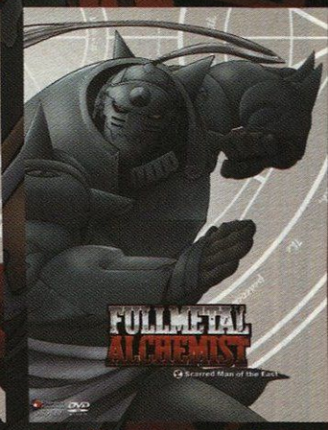


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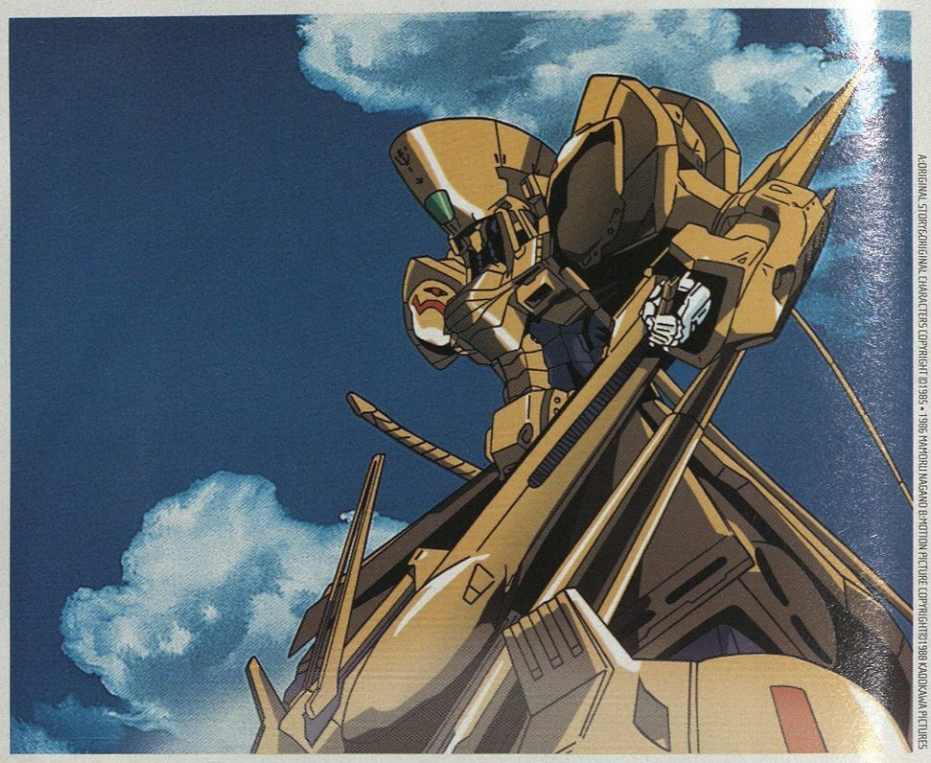
# The Five Star Stories

DEDICATED TO FANS AND FATIMAS EVERYWHERE



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***THE FIVE STAR STORIES*** movie isn't an adaptation so much as an introduction. Mamoru Nagano's magnum opus of galactic history and giant robot warfare fills 11 volumes of comics in its unfinished Japanese edition, whereas the movie is based on just the first volume, with a few bits cut out to shorten the running time.

This is the very beginning of a story projected to span thousands of years, an interstellar romance between the Emperor of Light

Amaterasu and one of his fellow godlike beings, the artificially conceived Fate of Destiny Lachesis. In this opening volume, they meet, fall in love, and wreck a little shop in their giant robot the *Knight of Gold*, leaving several millennia of galactic conquest, rebellion and flight into other dimensions for later.

Looked at in context, consider this a job well done. For fans of the series, it's a chance to see some of Nagano's beautiful characters and mecha creations realized in motion. The animation's aged quite well since its original release in 1989, largely on the strength of the design work—Nagano-drawn mecha look great in any decade.

The nips and tucks made to the story may make it a bit more difficult for this film to have the same impact on an unversed audience. Some small scenes from the comic that help explain a key plot twist are missing—the climax hinges on the revelation of a secret identity, and without those missing scenes, that revelation seems to leave a hefty plot hole behind. Still, newcomers will likely be impressed enough by the wicked-cool visuals to seek out the comic to fill in the rest.

If you're already a fan—or if you plan to become one—this is an essential component of your collection.

*—David F. Smith*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** ADV Films
**RUNNING TIME** 65 min.
**RATING** TV-14

### >> REST OF THE STORIES

For more Mamoru Nagano goodness, check out the ***Five Star Stories*** comic. Twenty-six English-language volumes are available from ToysPress, with more coming on a monthly basis. It's an excellent production with oversized pages, sound-effects glossaries, and full-color supplements on characters, mecha and future history. For information on where to find these books head to www.toyspress.com.

## New Getter Robo VOLUME 1

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

**EVEN IF RETRO REMAKES** hadn't captured the hearts of US fans over the past couple of years, it'd be criminal to dismiss ***New Getter Robo***. This retelling of Go Nagai's 1974 ***Getter Robo*** TV series follows karate master Ryoma, crazed mercenary Hayato and the hulking Buddhist monk Benkei as they battle giant monsters called Oni for the fate of the planet. On this first disc, we watch as superscientist Dr. Saotome recruits said unlikely heroes to pilot the combining robots of the *Getter Robo*. Each pilot gets his own introductory episode, culminating in a cool mecha versus monster melee. Surprisingly, however, the fight scenes do more than just show off the quirky and classic designs of Go Nagai. The action direction is remarkable; every punch, kick and energy beam is animated with a deep respect for the physics and nuance of anime ass-kicking. Plus, a decidedly manga-esque art vibe complete with heavy black character outlines comes off as both refreshing and cool. You've never seen a retro remake look so good.

*—Justin Kovalsky*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** Geneon Entertainment
**RUNNING TIME** 100 min.
**RATING** 16+

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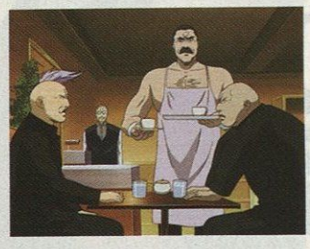
# Cromartie High School VOLUME 1

ON THE DVD!

## SCHOOL OF MOCK



**IT ISN'T ENOUGH** to merely describe to you how absurdly hilarious *Cromartie High School* is. I could sit here and tell you it's knee-slappingly funny and all this wacky stuff happens and sometimes even though what you're seeing on the screen is completely bizarre, you'll end up laughing. But you might not believe me until you've sat down to watch one of these 12-minute episodes with your own eyes. (Good thing an episode is included on the DVD that came along with this very magazine you're reading, huh? Phew, dodged that one.) Now, in all seriousness, ***Cromartie High School*** is the tale of Takashi Kamiyama, a well-adjusted youth who lives his life on the straight and narrow. That's somehow been enrolled at Cromartie High School, an educational institution that's less about education and more about being an institution for delinquents. Surrounded by a wild cast of badass students, Kamiyama makes the best of it and attempts to blend in. But it's difficult. Some of his classmates defy description, like Mechazawa, a smooth-talker who resembles a robot; or Freddie, a mustachioed dude who doesn't speak but is the spitting image of a rock frontman from the '70s; and Gorilla, who is...a gorilla that wears a watch. Kamiyama quickly befriends Hayashida, a classmate with a purple puff of hair that can often be seeing moving about on its own, as if it suddenly became sentient. But I've only scratched the surface—there are plenty of other crazy personalities in the show.

My favorite episode of this disc involves Mechazawa, as Kamiyama and Hayashida spy on the robotic student and wait for the moment at which the other Cromartie students will bring up the fact that he's made of metal. The joke is that no one's smart enough to ascertain that information except these two, and the reaction shots as their hopes are dashed time and again by what they thought would be the ultimate reveal are priceless.

In fact, a good half of the funny is brought by horrified reaction shots of various members of the cast. The best examples of this come during an episode where the afro-coiffed Noboru Yamaguchi, a student at an opposing school who secretly contributes joke postcards to radio shows, finds out that his joke-writing rival is none other than Cromartie's Kamiyama. His pissed-off reactions and inner monologues are simply brilliant. There are dozens more examples, and you'll be hard-pressed to keep a straight face through any of them.

Another great aspect of ***Cromartie*** is the English dub, well-written and well-acted by some of ADV's best talent. Comic timing is essential to making ***Cromartie*** work, and while purists will be more than happy with the subtitles, I found myself laughing a lot more while watching it dubbed. If absurdist comedies like ***Aqua Teen Hunger Force*** or ***Magical Shopping Arcade Abenobashi*** are your thing, then run, don't walk, to school.

*—Chris Johnston*

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005

**PUBLISHER**
ADV Films

**RUNNING TIME**
100 min.

**RATING**
TV-14

### >> 120% CROMARTIE

The ***Cromartie*** experience really isn't complete without the manga. In the first episode alone, Kamiyama makes two references to the fact that you should read it if you want to know the story behind this or that. But then, if you're reading the manga, there's more to be had in the anime as well. One of the funniest episodes on this disc has the characters humming a particular song that they can't get out of their heads, yet no one knows the title of it—the humor of which couldn't come across the same in manga form.

# Saiyuki Reload VOLUME 1

BOYS GONE WILD

NEWTYPE USA DVD OF THE MONTH

**FIFTY EPISODES AGO** in another series, the ***Saiyuki*** crew set out on a quest to stop the evil folks whose nasty experiments were turning the previously peaceful demons of Shangri-La into ravening monsters. But the original series came to an end without the good guys ever reaching India or the baddies holed up there, and we all know what that means—sequel!

***Saiyuki Reload*** has the same lovable characters and the same travel-westward-while-getting-randomly-attacked-by-demons plot, but this time around the tone is slightly different. While the first series fell into a demon-of-the-week groove, this disc manages to deftly sidestep that pattern (for the most part—the third episode flirts with the formula when Gojyo, Hakkai and Goku are attacked by copies of themselves).

The first few episodes do a good job setting up the characters and world, so if you missed the first series, you won't be hopelessly lost. In fact, the purpose of the first episode is to reintroduce the series, but with a unique enough structure that it's entertaining even if you're intimately familiar with the story. The episode is told through the eyes of a precocious little girl who gets suspicious of the four weirdos boarding at her family's inn. She takes it upon herself to protect the town from them. The plot is pretty typical—bad guys meet Sanzo's party and end up regretting it—but our heroes are in fine funky form, and the kid is just too cute for words.

The second episode reintroduces Kougaiji and his crew, a group of anti-heroes that fans tend to love at least as much as the heroes. It's so jam-packed with plot twists that it feels more like three episodes than one. It's one of the great ***Saiyuki*** episodes because the enemy attacking our party switches five (or more!) times in under ten minutes. That's got to be a record.

The disc ends on a poignant note with the fourth episode, which is so...anti-***Saiyuki***. It has almost no fighting and not much angsting over the party's past. Instead, we get to angst over a random demon whose love for a human woman has given him the strength to stay sane when all the other demons are out on killing sprees. He's a nice guy—a painter by trade—but he's losing to the dark side, and he knows it.

It's a fitting end for this first volume, which reminds me exactly what drew me to these characters and their quest in the first place.

*—Gina Koerner*

**AVAILABLE**
Now

**PUBLISHER**
Geneon Entertainment

**RUNNING TIME**
100 min.

**RATING**
16+

©2003 Kazuya Minekura/Kodansha, TV TOKYO, dentsu, Pierrot

## >> DUBBED AGAIN

Geneon's release of ***Saiyuki Reload*** uses different voice actors than were featured in ADV Films' releases of the original TV series and the ***Requiem*** movie. While it may take you a moment to warm up to them, their performances capture the personalities of the characters perfectly.

©2003 RAUX/Operation EVE

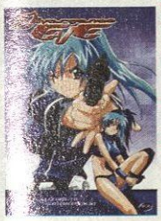
# Divergence Eve
VOLUME 1

## IN SPACE, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOUR CHEST BOUNCE

**THE FIRST THING** you may wonder upon embarking on a voyage across ***Divergence Eve*** is how none of these massively endowed female space pilots has severe back problems. Your second reaction, however, will likely be confusion. The first episode plunges right into daring interstellar action with stark 3D CG and violently technical space jargon without any setup, leaving viewers politely nodding as they ask themselves: Is this what the *whole* series is like?

Luckily, the four other episodes on this DVD will alleviate your fears. It's the 24th century, and Cadet Misaki Kureha is training for the elite Seraphim fighter squadron at the Watcher's Nest space station, ten parsecs from Earth. It's up to her and the other pilot trainees to fend off The Goul, an interdimensional alien race, and uncover their true intentions before things get out of hand.

It's obvious that ***Divergence Eve's*** creators were inspired by ***Evangelion***. Just like GAINAX's seminal robot show, there are mysterious enemies (one per episode, naturally), you've got groups of young pilots futilely taking them on, and in Misaki you have a unexplainable transformational power that can either stop Ghouls in their tracks or cause her to explode in a berserk rage. The chief addition ***Divergence*** makes to the formula is a generous helping of cheesecake, from the pilots' ample bosoms to periodic Misaki nudity. Get past that, however, and you'll find a fast-paced tale that will keep the sci-fi contingent glued to the tube.

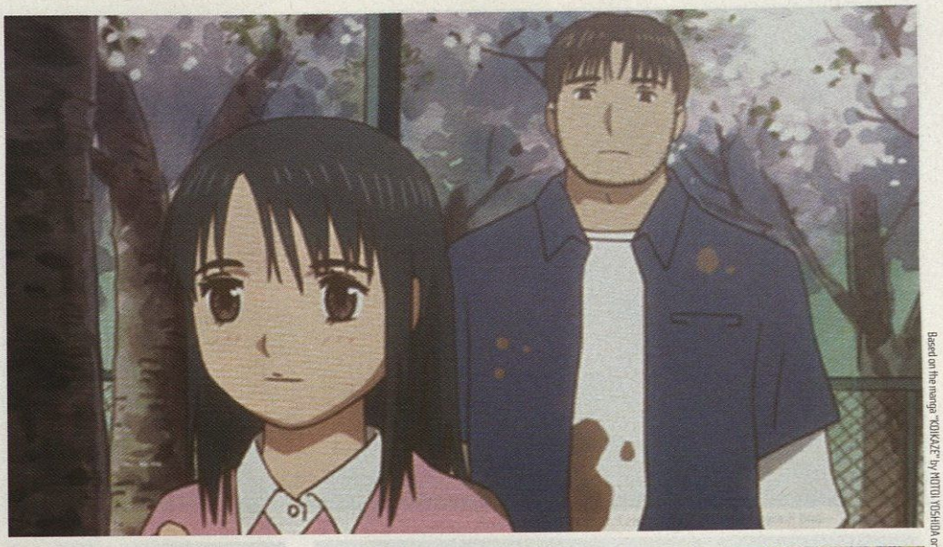


**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** ADV Films
**RUNNING TIME** 125 min.
**RATING** TV-14

*—Kevin Gifford*

# Koi Kaze VOLUME 1

## AN AFFLICTION OF THE HEART



**AT 28,** Koshiro is poised between what was doubtless a difficult adolescence and his incipient transformation into a bitter, lonely man. Freshly dumped for being distant, he doesn't seem fazed—until he makes a chance connection with a high school student and breaks down. In a strange twist of fate, this girl, Nanoka, turns out to be his younger sister. She's coming to live with him and his father; he hasn't seen her since she was a baby. What will this mean?

Despite appearances, ***Koi Kaze*** is not another disc to set comfortably on the shelf next to ***Ai Yori Aoshi***. It's a depressing, fraught tale of a troubled man coming to terms with his own dysfunctional emotions.

***Koi Kaze*** can be a little ham-fisted in its use of symbolism—swirling cherry blossoms bring love on the breeze—but it's an emotional tale all the same. Protagonists with deep-seated problems are nothing new for anime, but they're usually teens. Koshiro is a quiet, functional adult with a job and an ex-girlfriend. In that way, it's uniquely compelling.

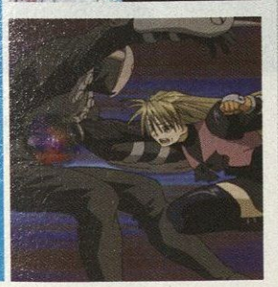
The show's pace is languid. Coupled with its shaky, often raw emotional tenor, it's tough to watch.

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** Geneon Entertainment
**RUNNING TIME** 100 min.
**RATING** 16+

Koshiro's near-obsession with how Nanoka feels about him is disquieting not only because it's poignant, but also because he's troubled by it. When he sneaks a sniff of her bra, it's worrisome, not ***Love Hina***-style comedy. ***Koi Kaze*** is not a reassuring show, but if it skirts the edge of disaster instead of plunging in, it may offer warmth to lonely, troubled people, and that's worth a lot.

*—Christian Nutt*

Based on the manga "KOI KAZE" by MOTOI YOSHIOKA originally serialized in the EVENING published by Kodansha Ltd. © 2004 MOTOI YOSHIOKA/DAISHIN KOI KAZE PARTNERSHIP



# Tokyo Underground VOLUME 1

## BAD COMPANY

***TOKYO UNDERGROUND*** **MAY** come off as one big onslaught of anime clichés, but don't hold that against it. Just beneath its sea of teens awakening to cosmic powers in an underground city lies a timeless tale of hope against all odds.

Far below the city of Tokyo is an entirely different world called The Underground where many have developed extrasensory powers. The show kicks off when Chelsea, the Maiden of Light, and Ruri, her bodyguard, escape from the subterranean landscape to live on the surface. But a ruling organization called The Company won't let them go without a fight, and their newfound friends from the surface, Rumina and Ginnosuke, desperately struggle to protect them.

As the characters strengthen their bonds of friendship, we're offered a number of spectacular only-in-anime battles. The hyper action combines with a romantic undercurrent that keeps things dramatic and ensures that you'll be rooting for this intrepid gang of teens all the way through this first disc.

**AVAILABLE** Now
**PUBLISHER** Geneon Entertainment
**RUNNING TIME** 125 min.
**RATING** 13+

*—Laura Geist*

© 2002 AKINOBU URAKU/SQUARE ENIX • TV TOKYO, DENTSU, PIERROT Author: Akinobu Uraku

# Cutie Honey COLLECTOR'S EDITION

## OLD-SCHOOL ACTION IN A NEW-SCHOOL PACKAGE

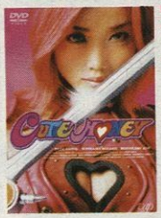
"Honey flash!"—and Honey instantly transforms into the warrior of love!

Honey and Seiji appear in the same costumes as in the manga.

CobaltClaw is one tough enemy.

©2003 キューティーハニー製作委員会 ©1973 永井豪／ダイナミック企画

**HONEY KISARAGI IS** a clumsy but occasionally handy office girl that everyone thinks is a troublemaker. In reality, she's a super-android who can instantaneously change clothes and disguise herself as anyone she chooses using a special device called the "I System." The system has caught the attention of the criminal organization Panther Claw. Led by Sister Jill, the nefarious group abducts Dr. Utsugi, who knows the secret of Honey's special ability. Joined by detective Natsuko Aki of the National Public Safety Commission and a self-styled journalist named Seiji Hayami, Honey pursues the vicious Panther Claw generals in order to save Dr. Utsugi!



**AVAILABLE**
Now in Japan

**PUBLISHER**
VAP

**RUNNING TIME**
93 min. + extras

***Cutie Honey*** is based on Go Nagai's legendary manga, which has been made into numerous animated series. Last year, Hideaki Anno of ***Neon Genesis Evangelion*** fame reincarnated the popular title and made it into this wacky live-action movie starring a group of quirky actors. He assembled a very talented and creative staff to help design the film, including Katsuro Onoue, who did the special effects for ***Onmyoji II***, Masayuki, one of the episode directors for ***Evangelion***, popular manga artists Katsuya Terada and Moyoko Anno, designer Yutaka Izubuchi, special effects director Makoto Kamiya and action choreographer Kazuyoshi Yamada. They have created a movie that is visually unprecedented with an alternately cute and voguish edginess.

BlackClaw's minions are...musicians?!

The first pressing comes with a bonus disc that includes trailers and music videos. It also contains two figurines, several storyboards by Shinji Higuchi and an analysis booklet. A standard version is also available; it comes with the movie and the analysis booklet.

**CAST** Honey Kisaragi: ERIKO SATO; Sister Jill: EISUKE SASAI; Dr. Utsugi: MASAKI KYOMOTO; Natsuko Aki: MIKAKO ICHIKAWA; Seiji Hayami: JUN MURAKAMI; CobaltClaw: SIE KOHINATA

### >> CHECK IT OUT!

The casting is simply excellent. Toru [illegible]zuka plays Sister Jill's butler, and his acting really stands out. But most remarkable is Mitsuhiro Oikawa, who plays BlackClaw, one of the four Panther Claw generals. Mitsuhiro steals the scene during a big fight with Honey.

# Rozen Maiden VOLUME 1

## LIVING DOLLS

Jun receives a trunk containing a mysterious living doll named Shinku. What exactly *is* she, and what does she want?

Shinku's powers can control other dolls.

### >> CHECK IT OUT!

This show is packed with laughs! Check out the scene where the proud Shinku blushes when Jun discovers that she isn't quite tall enough to reach the doorknob. And be sure to pay attention to Jun's sister Nori, who's ditzy beyond belief!

**EIGHTH GRADER** Jun Sakurada is a textbook teen shut-in. He's so afraid of attending school that he spends most of his days shopping online from the safety of his bedroom. But his life is turned upside down when he receives an adorable antique doll that he can't recall purchasing. The doll is alive, and she introduces herself as Shinku, one of the legendary Rozen Maidens. Before Jun can get a grip on the surreal situation, he's attacked by a gaggle of gorgeous dolls. Shinku offers to save Jun from his attackers, but only if he'll become her "medium" —a servant who will help her channel her powers. Jun agrees and soon finds himself caught in the epic battle of the Rozen Maidens!

**AVAILABLE**
Now in Japan

**PUBLISHER**
TBS

**RUNNING TIME**
50 min. + extras

***Rozen Maiden*** is a fun-filled fantasy anime based on the popular manga by PEACH-PIT and brought to life by the staff of ***Mahoromatic***. This DVD contains Episode 1, in which Jun meets Shinku, and Episode 2, which introduces another Rozen Maiden named Hinaichigo and her medium Tomoe. Special features include non-credit opening/ending sequences and footage of a TV special where the show's director Mamoru Matsuo makes an appearance. The first pressing comes with a screen-printed disc label, a postcard and a colorful Digipak jacket that holds up to six discs.

©PEACH-PIT・幻冬舎コミックス／講談社・乙女製作委員会

**CAST** Jun Sakurada: ASAMI SANADA; Shinku: MIYUKI SAWASHIRO; Hinaichigo: SAKURA NOGAWA; Tomoe Kashiwaba: MASAYO KURATA

# Kannazuki no Miko VOLUME 1

## KISS YOUR SWEET SIXTEEN GOODBYE!

Soma fights the other avatars in order to protect his beloved Himeko.

**HIMEKO KURUSUGAWA IS** an ordinary teenager who, until now, has lived a peaceful life in a quiet mountain town. She attends Otonotachibana Academy, a grand and impressive school tucked snugly in the bosom of a natural paradise. As her 16th birthday approaches, Himeko receives an invitation to a private celebration with Chikane Himemiya, the most popular girl in school, whose birthday just happens to coincide with Himeko's. On their birthday, an unexpected lunar eclipse causes a strange awakening in seven teenagers who witness it—they realize that they are the dark avatars of an evil serpent god known as the Eight Serpents, who threatens to destroy the world! Himeko soon learns that she is the priestess of the sun and her friend Chikane is the priestess of the moon. Together with Himeko's longtime friend Soma Ogami, who also turns out to be one of the avatars of the Eight Serpents, Himeko and Chikane rise up and fight the others!

This Volume 1 DVD of the TV anime series *Kannazuki no Miko*, based on the manga series from Kaishaku (*Steel Angel Kurumi*) that's currently running in *Shonen Ace* magazine, contains the first two episodes and bonus footage including TV spots and a non-credit version of the opening scenes before the title screen. The package comes with a reversible DVD jacket, full-color booklet and silkscreen disc label, and first-pressing buyers will also get a soundtrack CD, liner notes and a DVD storage box for the entire series with an exclusive cover design by Kaishaku!

©2004 介錯／神無月の巫女製作委員会

**AVAILABLE**
Now in Japan

**PUBLISHER**
Toshiba Entertainment

**RUNNING TIME**
50 min. + extras

Himeko and Chikane awaken to their priestess powers and fight!

The robot fights are thrilling!

Soma and the other avatars of the Eight Serpents have the power to control giant robots.

**STAFF** creator: KAISHAKU; director: TETSUYA YANAGISAWA; series organization & script: SUMIO UETAKE; character designer & general animation director: MAKI FUJII
**CAST** Himeko: NORIKO SHITAYA; Chikane: AYAKO KAWASUMI; Soma: JUNJI MAJIMA

### >> CHECK IT OUT!

With a fantasy-romance setting, beautiful girls, explosive robot battles and love and laughter at school, this versatile show has a little something for everyone! Pay close attention to the mecha designs from Goro Murata (*Cyborg 009*).

# Rizelmine DVD BOX 1

## TAKE MY WIFE, PLEASE!

The carefree Rizel has an unsophisticated, simple-minded love for Tomonori.

©スギサキユキオ／角川書店・ピーターライツ・m.o.e.

Tomonori has a secret crush on his homeroom teacher Miss Ihata.

**TOMONORI IWAKI IS** a 15-year-old boy who has a thing for older girls. One day, a cute 12-year-old girl named Rizel barges into his house brandishing a marriage certificate, claiming to be his wife. As it turns out, she's a genetically modified human and the government's best-kept secret project! Tomonori was picked as the best match to be her hubby. He ends up having to live with this annoying little troublemaker (his complete opposite in every way!) *and* her three so-called "guardians"—Papa A, Papa B and Papa C!

*Rizelmine* is a hysterical and romantic anime based on Yukiru Sugisaki's original manga. This first DVD box contains Episodes 1-12 on four discs (which were previously available separately), packed in the special collector's box that was initially offered with the first pressing of Volume 4. This value-priced limited edition box set has been released to commemorate the broadcast of another m.o.e. production titled *Ultimate Girls*, which began airing on TV in Japan this January. The second DVD box (containing Episodes 13-24) is also available.

**AVAILABLE**
Now in Japan

**PUBLISHER**
m.o.e.

**RUNNING TIME**
180 min.

Tomonori denies that Rizel is his wife, but she ends up living in his closet anyway.

**CAST** Tomonori Iwaki: KAPPEI YAMAGUCHI; Rizel: RIE KUGIMIYA

### >> CHECK IT OUT!

Rizel's loving devotion to Tomonori will warm your heart. The show is also chock full of gags involving the happy-go-lucky Rizel and her three guardian Papas. It's a blast to watch, but beware—it also contains scenes you won't want your parents to see!

MANGA'S #1 NUN WITH A GUN IS BACK!
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# Divergence Eve

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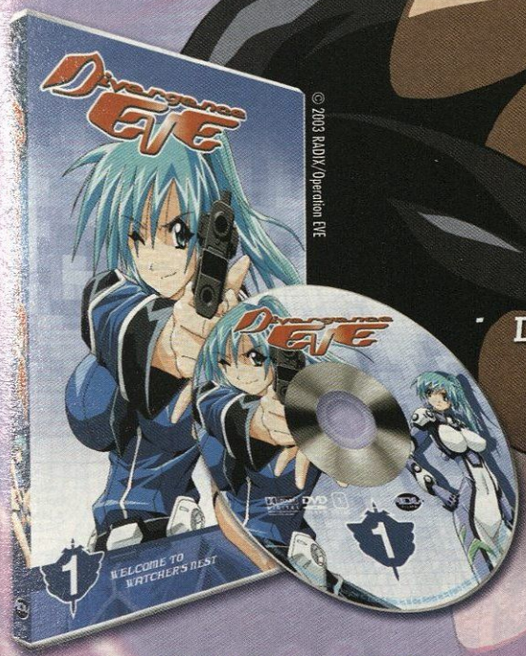


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# No Man's Land

## SHARP SHOOTER

***NO MAN'S LAND***, one of Seven Seas' first forays into American-made manga, manages the unthinkable—it captures the nuances of Japanese comics while maintaining a distinctly American vibe. Mixing elements of horror and spaghetti Westerns with a deliciously detailed manga aesthetic, ***No Man's Land*** is surprisingly solid stuff.

In the tale, Captain John Parker once worked as a bodyguard to President Lincoln, but after the commander in chief's untimely demise, Parker is framed for conspiracy. On the run from the law, he heads west and takes the name No Man. In this first volume, we're offered intriguing pieces of Parker's past, including the fact that his wife and son have been wrongly taken from him. While these dollops of drama are delivered via flashback, Parker has his hands full in the present. He's just been hired to hunt demons in the small town of New Hades, and as he begins to battle with his dark enemies, a posse of cowboys turns up; it seems they're out for Parker's blood. What's their connection to his perilous past?

While the mysteries and character development are top-notch, the action is what fuels the fun. Cinematic and fluidly rendered by talented artist Jennyson Rosero, every kick, demon attack and gun blast packs maximum velocity.

Writer Jason DeAngelis slyly doles out genre clichés while working within the structure of modern manga. He also provides a backdrop that's steeped in US history, making this tale of revenge, redemption and demon-killing all the more accessible for American readers. Tightly scripted and consistently engaging, ***No Man's Land*** is a fantastic first outing from the creative team at Seven Seas.

*—Justin Kovalsky*

**AVAILABLE** Now
**PUBLISHER** Seven Seas
**RATING** 13+

©2004 Seven Seas Entertainment LLC and Jason DeAngelis

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# Gunslinger Girl

## VOLUME 2

## FROM THE GUNS OF BABES

**WHEN YOU THINK** of a trained assassin, you're likely to picture a dark, stoic character (usually a guy) in a black jacket and skullcap, perched atop a building with a laser-sighted sniper rifle. But the world of ***Gunslinger Girl*** is different. In its unique reality, a special agency adopts young girls after they've gone through physical and emotional trauma, fixes them up and reprograms them as master assassins—the thought being that no one's going to expect that the Girl Scout at their door is dealing death, not cookies. And you'd be surprised how many people fall for it.

This long-awaited second volume of the manga series opens on a touching story about Claes, a brunette whose training is not going smoothly. Her handler (one of the grown-up guys who shuffle the tots along on their missions) is stern with her at first, but they end up developing a strong bond on a fishing trip. When her handler dies unexpectedly, she's "rewritten" for a new handler, but she retains the lessons she learned from her former master.

The coolest and most surprising bits in the book are when the girls get medieval on an unsuspecting adult. In one particularly memorable scene, Henrietta snows this dude into thinking she's just a scared, innocent girl and begs him to help her. Of course, once his guard is down, she punches him in the ribs and fills the hallway with bullets. Awesome.

As it turns out, controlling the girls isn't easy, and when they get in a zone, their emotions can go a bit... out of control. What's interesting is how the handlers flip-flop between seeing them as girls and as tools to carry out missions. For raw action, intriguing story and cute, kick-ass young girls make *Gunslinger* well worth checking out.

*—Chris Johnston*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** ADV Manga
**RATING** 15+

YOU REALLY DIDN'T STEAL THE SWORD?
VERY WELL. I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT.
THANKS A LOT, BIG GUY.
NI-NO WAY KOSUKE'S HOUSE
I'LL RELEASE YOU—UNDER THE CONDITION THAT YOU FIND AND RETURN THE SWORD!!
HOWEVER, DUE TO MY PRESENCE CAUSING UPON THE BLADE OF HEAVEN!!
NI-NIII...? A HARDCORE YET ECCENTRIC WARRIOR OR A WORLD MONARCH?!

# Blade of Heaven VOLUME 1

## STOLEN GOODS

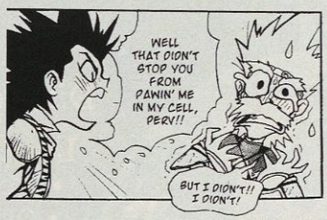
**SHONEN STORIES CAN** be a blast. With fast-talking heroes and sweeping cosmic themes, it's easy to understand their appeal to starry-eyed teens. ***Blade of Heaven*** will surely amuse staunch fans of the genre.

After protagonist Soma proves himself innocent of stealing the Blade of Heaven, he's sent to the human world to recover said powerful sword. Soma is accompanied on his quest by his love interest, the heavenly princess Aroomee, and comedic relief/chaperone General Winter. All the while, the demons of Hell are planning an attack on Heaven, which has been weakened by the loss of the powerful blade.

Peppered with solid action, silly sight gags and generally juvenile humor (scatological jokes and countless cracks on General Winter's old age abound), ***Blade of Heaven*** hits its mark.

*—Justin Kovalsky*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** TOKYOPOP Inc.
**RATING** 13+



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# Kids Joker VOLUME 1

## THIS JOKER IS DEFINITELY WILD

**HIGH SCHOOL CAN** be a trying time for a young lady. Between studying, friends and dating, there's a lot to juggle during those four years. Things don't get any easier when you've also dedicated your life to protecting the public. Hotaru Yanagawa, the rough and tumble star of ***Kids Joker***, is in just such a situation.

Even though she's still in school, Hotaru has already decided what she wants to do with her life—she's gonna be a police officer, and she takes every opportunity to train for her future career. For example, *Kids Joker* begins with Hotaru teaching a manners lesson to a pervert on a train. This sort of thing apparently happens to Hotaru a lot, as none of her classmates is surprised when she shows up for school with cuts and bruises from one of her crime-fighting adventures.

Everything gets even more interesting for Hotaru when a handsome (of course) secret agent named Yui Kajiwara enters her life. The pair is soon mixed up in an elaborate plot involving Hotaru's classmates and a serial kidnapper. Yui prefers to work by the book, but he has to put up with Hotaru's gung-ho style of justice. Things get extra dangerous when a gang of thugs takes Yui hostage, leaving Hotaru on her own in a situation that high school sure hasn't prepared her for.

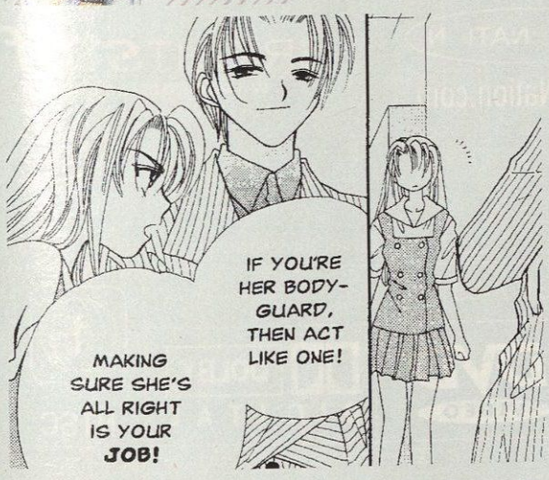
With its real-world crime backdrop, *Kids Joker* proves that it's not your typical high school romance manga.

*—Phil Theobald*

### >> WHO'S THAT GIRL?

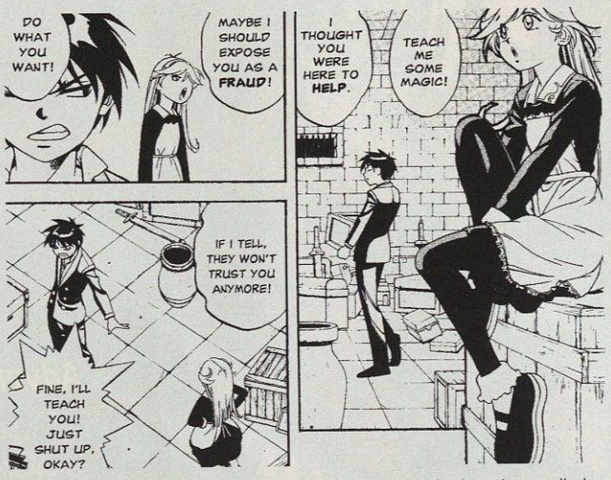
You probably don't recognize the name Maki Fujita. ***Kids Joker*** is her first manga to be translated for an American audience. But she's had a few other series in Japan, such as ***Romance Kara Hajimeyo*** and ***Hallelujah*** (she even refers to these series in a couple of biographical mini-comics within ***Kids***). Perhaps if we're lucky, we'll see these other titles on US shelves in the future!

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** ADV Manga
**RATING** 13+




# Orphen VOLUME 1

## SIMPLE PLEASURE


DO WHAT YOU WANT!
MAYBE I SHOULD EXPOSE YOU AS A FRAUD!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE HERE TO HELP.
TEACH ME SOME MAGIC!
IF I TELL, THEY WON'T TRUST YOU ANYMORE!
FINE, I'LL TEACH YOU! JUST SHUT UP, OKAY?

**WHILE MANGA OFTEN** inspires sweeping epics and introspective tales, there's something to be said for a simple story that's merely meant to entertain—which is ***Orphen*** in a nutshell. The first volume of the manga doesn't break new ground for the fantasy genre, but its finely honed mix of comedy and drama will appeal to most manga aficionados.

The title character is a young sorcerer bumming around the city of Urbanrama. He doesn't really have a job—instead, he picks up assignments from a shadowy boss called Childman, doing whatever's required through the application of his formidable magical skills. Whether it's finding a magical ring or a lost pet dragon, he'll do just about anything. Of course he has plenty of friends to help (or is that hinder?) him.

Each panel in a manga can be thought of as a frame from a movie. And it seems, as this series begins, that the frames are paced further apart than usual, leading to disconcerting jumps in the narrative. Once it settles into a rhythm, though, it's pretty much golden.

Artist Hajime Sawada seems completely aware that the plot isn't exactly epic, so he isn't afraid to interrupt it and let his bold artwork shine through. Its distinctive, high-contrast look, the exaggerated expressions of the characters and the motion of their poses—mixed with unusual page composition—make this a very good move. ***Orphen*** may not be a terribly original manga, but it makes up for that with tight execution, and the result is pleasant indeed.

*—Christian Nutt*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** ADV Manga
**RATING** 13+

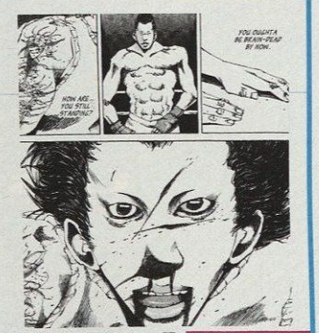
©1998 Yoshinobu Akita/Hajime Sawada ©1998 Hiroyo Kusaka Originally published in Japan in 1998 by KADOKAWA SHOTEN PUBLISHING CO., LTD. Tokyo. English translation rights arranged with KADOKAWA SHOTEN PUBLISHING CO., LTD. Tokyo.

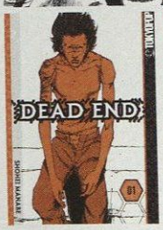
# Dead End VOLUME 1

## SECOND CHANCES

**>> IT'S RARE FOR** a manga to offer subtle commentary on the mundane trappings of modern life, but Shohei Manabe's ***Dead End*** does just that. More impressively, it entertains and horrifies the reader while delivering its heady themes. >> Drawn in a rough, sketchy style that's well-suited to ***Dead End's*** dark subject matter and gritty urban setting, the story kicks off in modern Tokyo. When we meet Shirou, an apathetic construction worker living a humdrum existence, he finds a stranger—a naked girl named Lucy—in his bed. Her spacey philosophical perspective opens Shirou's eyes to the beauty of the world around him. They fall in love, but it all ends too soon when Lucy goes missing and all of Shirou's friends are mysteriously murdered. >> Thus begins Shirou's trek into Tokyo's underbelly, where he encounters a sea of criminals, sadists and lonely souls on his search for Lucy—the only person who's given his life meaning. >> Aimed squarely at a mature crowd, ***Dead End*** is a remarkably passionate work that defies the look and conventions of modern manga.

*—Justin Kovalsky*




**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** TOKYOPOP Inc.
**RATING** 16+

© 2001 Shohei Manabe

# JoJo's
## Bizarre Adventure

VOL.5

COMING APRIL

VOL.6

COMING JUNE

### *Adventure 10* - D'Arby the Gambler

Seeking information on Dio's whereabouts, the companions encounter a gambler named D'Arby who claims to have the information they need. The catch is, they have to beat him in the ultimate wager–one where their very souls are at stake! Can the Joestar party outwit a master gambler at his own game?

### *Adventure 11*- Dio's "The World" - The Warrior of the Void: Iced

Jotaro and his companions finally arrive at Dio's lair and find their way to the room where his coffin resides. Just as they prepare to strike the fatal blow, Dio's mysterious Stand powers, coupled with that of his finest assassin, Iced, slay one of the party before the group's horrified eyes. But even that doesn't quench Dio's thirst for blood!

## VOL 1-4 *NOW AVAILABLE*

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## >> HEART BEAT

### Times Two

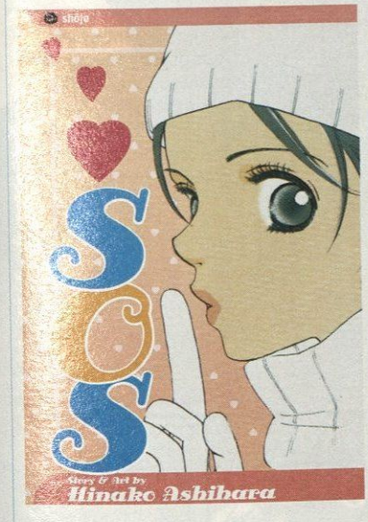
**WHETHER YOU'VE** been nailed by one of Cupid's arrows or merely grazed, you'd have to have a heart of stone to not appreciate the love stories contained in ***X2***. Shouko Akira succinctly packs five powerful tales of whimsy and romance into one handy volume. Most of the chapters are steeped in realism featuring normal people making connections amidst the drudgery of modern life. Although these could have felt formulaic and clichéd, Akira's addition of a symbolic binding element between each couple saves the day. A soda can, a garden, a track team, UFOs—all become poignant symbols for higher love. This clever turn makes what could have been a so-so romance manga into a compelling and fun read.

*—Jennifer M. Contino*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** VIZ
**RATING** Teen

©2002 Shouko Akira/Shogakukan, Inc.

### SOS




**AH, YOUNG LOVE**—so much drama, so many obstacles! ***SOS*** is a compilation of three poignant short stories that explore the wild world of teen romance. The first, "SOS," follows a trio of high school matchmakers who form a secret dating agency in the hopes of sparking new relationships (and making some serious cash). This lighthearted tale takes some startlingly dark turns before its upbeat ending. The next entry is "That Sweet Organ Song," a heartbreaking story about a wannabe poet and a young composer who dreams of sharing his music with the world—a dream that's all but dashed when tragedy strikes. And finally, in "The Good Life," a spoiled-rotten guy takes advantage of his good-natured girlfriend. She'd better put her foot down pronto, or he's going to keep walking all over her. If you're a sucker for shoujo romance, you'll be enamored with this collection.

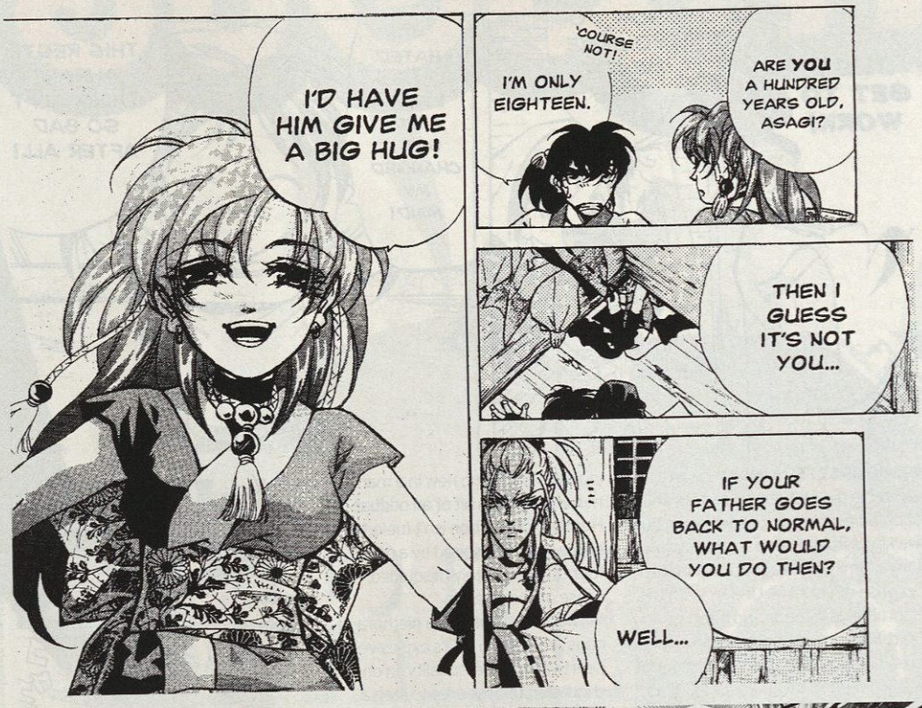
*—Paige Record*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** VIZ
**RATING** Older Teens

©2003 Hinako Ashihara/Shogakukan, Inc.

## By the Sword VOLUME 1

### FRESHLY SHARPENED


I'D HAVE HIM GIVE ME A BIG HUG!
I'M ONLY EIGHTEEN.
'COURSE NOT!
ARE YOU A HUNDRED YEARS OLD, ASAGI?
THEN I GUESS IT'S NOT YOU...
IF YOUR FATHER GOES BACK TO NORMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU DO THEN?
WELL...

**IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR** with the other recent English-language offerings from manga-ka Sanami Matoh, like TOKYOPOP's ***FAKE*** and Broccoli's ***Until the Full Moon***, ***By the Sword*** might catch you a little off-guard. While it has witty dialogue and likeable characters, ***Sword*** has nary a hint of shonen ai. It opens on sword-swinging action as Asagi, a *karinin* demon hunter and the book's dashing male lead, battles a huge frog-beast. It's here that we learn of the legendary sword from the title—called the Moegi, it's rumored to give its bearer the power of 101 demons. And it just might be the thing Asagi needs to overcome his problem of breaking swords during battle.

NO, WHAT AM I THINKING? I JUST RAN INTO HIM TODAY. WHAT ARE THE ODDS...
WAIT A MINUTE, IF THIS GUY'S HALF-DEMON, THERE IS A CHANCE...
HE'S GOT HUMAN
HIS EYES ARE TURNING RED!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ASAGI? THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN PROVE
KRAK
KRAK

Finding the fabled weapon is only the beginning. It comes with baggage—a girl named Kaede and her father, a once-powerful but now pint-sized demon named Kurenai. They've been fending off would-be thieves and searching high and low for the man who's destined to wield the legendary blade so Kurenai can return to his regular fatherly form. Asagi just might be the answer to their conundrum. He joins the two on their journey, and it's not long before the trio is engaged in a heated battle that requires use of the Moegi. Naturally, there's an unexpected hitch—when Asagi wields the blade, Kurenai temporarily takes over Kaede's supple young female body, allowing the shrunken spirit to unleash his full demonic wrath. But that's hardly a satisfactory solution to his wandering-spirit woes. They've got to find a permanent fix, so the trio sets out to do just that. Unfortunately for them, there's a lineup of foes just itching to get their hands on the sword, providing more than a few exciting battles in the pages of this first volume, which is briskly paced and beautifully illustrated by Matoh.

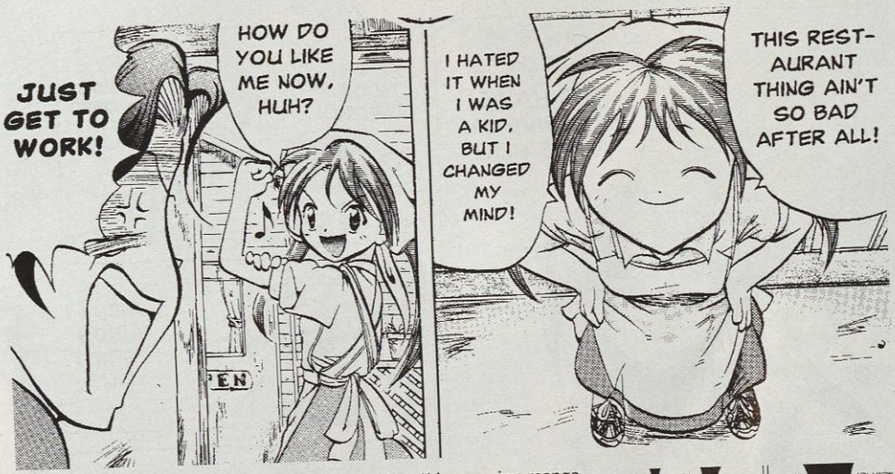
The real fun of the book isn't the copious action (though that's good too); it's the comedic interplay between our three main characters. The diminutive demon and his ditzy daughter are the source of most of the laughs, be it someone commenting on Kurenai's small stature and short temper or an enemy taking full advantage of Kaede's wide-eyed, youthful naiveté. Dysfunction certainly runs in the family. By the end of the first volume, the shared experiences of our trio have fleshed them out to the point where you feel for them when they find out that their journey is really just beginning. It'll make waiting for Volume 2 all the more difficult.

*—Chris Johnston*

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** ADV Manga
**RATING** 13+

© 2003 by Sanami Matoh/BIBLOS. Originally published in Japan in 2003 by BIBLOS Co., Ltd.

# Noodle Fighter Miki
VOLUME 1
HEY MIKI YOU'RE SO FINE


JUST GET TO WORK!
HOW DO YOU LIKE ME NOW, HUH?
I HATED IT WHEN I WAS A KID, BUT I CHANGED MY MIND!
THIS RESTAURANT THING AIN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL!

©Jun Saitogawa 2002 All rights reserved. Originally published in 2002 by Akita Publishing Co., Ltd. Tokyo. English translation rights arranged with Akita Publishing Co., Ltd. Tokyo.

**BEING GREETED KINDLY** by an adorable girl at a ramen restaurant should be a pleasant experience. But walking into the shop owned by Miki's family just might result in the surprise of your life. Underneath the adorable demeanor and heart of gold, Miki cloaks a catastrophic secret. She's cursed with the temper of a steroid-pumping linebacker. When she witnesses even the tiniest injustice, she will kick, poke and punch any offender to the pavement.

While it's true that the juxtaposition of cute looks and badass fighting skills is nothing new in a manga heroine, Miki is a bit of an oddball. Her fiery disposition isn't fueled by battle lust; it's inspired by a profound, if completely misguided, sense of compassion.

In this first volume, a plethora of gags are built on Miki's explosively heartwarming personality. In one short chapter, she tries to stop a fight between two guys outside of the restaurant. Instead of helping matters, she pummels both fellows to a pulp as they all whirl wildly into the dining area of the noodle shop. In another scene, Miki threatens two small children who are innocently playing in her tree house. She claims they're "breaking and entering," and they must be brought to justice.

That brings us to the irony of the title *Noodle Fighter Miki*. You may expect the story of a rough and tumble noodle waitress who lays waste to street toughs, but what you get is a charmingly hysterical tale of a mildly insane teen who's as much heart as she is schoolyard ruffian. It's laugh-a-minute stuff that'll appeal to your silly side.

—*Justin Kovalsky*

DON'T EVER COME BACK!
WHAT A WASTE OF MY TIME. YOU, MORON!
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU!
YOU FINALLY GET IT, HUH?
HEY, I KNOW YOU! YOU BROUGHT SOME RAMEN TO MY HOUSE ONE TIME.
EVERYTHING I'VE DONE WILL BE FOR NOTHING!
SHE'S GONNA WAKE UP SOON...
ゴクッ
Cool a doodle doo
FINE. I'LL HAVE TO TAKE...
DRASTIC MEASURES.

| | |
|---|---|
| AVAILABLE | March 2005 |
| PUBLISHER | ADV Manga |
| RATING | 13+ |

© 2003 Aki Shimazu

# Qwan VOLUME 1
TODAY'S SPECIAL: DEMON SOULS

**QWAN IS A HUNGRY**, hungry little guy. But he can't just roll on by the local White Castle and get a sack of slyders to satisfy his cravings. His diet is very particular—he eats the souls of demons for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Unfortunately, they aren't always easy to come by, and that's just the beginning of this cute, energetic young boy's problems. He and his companion Teikou (a winged creature without a head) are searching for the boy's purpose in life and the reason for his unusual appetite. During their quest, they encounter the opportunistic and money-grubbing Chikei, as well as a prostitute who seems to know about Qwan's predicament and the possible location of an ancient scroll that will unravel the secrets of his existence.

It may initially seem like Qwan is just a naïve boy with the need to nosh. At one point, Qwan and Chikei run into a girl who controls some sinister bug demons, and, in one of his less flattering moments, Qwan devours her humanoid bug-demon companion. He then turns his appetite on the girl, but since she's not a demon, his attack ends up being more like a kiss. Something about his reaction tells you there's quite a lot going on in that crazy li'l noggin of his.

The ambiance and finely detailed artwork of ***Qwan*** are impressive. As our adventurers traverse their world, you really get a sense of its unique history—a m... for any good fantasy tale. Those of you who enjoy fantasy manga or who are odd... amused by the idea of a de... mon-eating child should consume this title like Qwan does his favorite snack.

—*Laura Gei...*

| | |
|---|---|
| AVAILABLE | March 2005 |
| PUBLISHER | TOKYOPOP Inc. |
| RATING | 13+ |

| | |
|---|---|
| AVAILABLE | February 2005 |
| PUBLISHER | Seven Seas |
| RATING | 13+ |

# Amazing Agent Luna VOLUME 1
SECRET AGENT GIRL

**LUNA HAS BEEN** raised to be a top secret agent. But all that training didn't prepare her for the pitfalls of high school.

In the smartly written first volume of *Amazing Agent Luna*, we're introduced to the title character, a kick-ass cutie who's been sent to a prestigious school to gather evidence against the maniacal Count Von Brucken. What she finds is an emotional minefield where she's picked on by the popular girls and she fumbles her first meetings with the cute and mysterious new transfer student Jonah Von Brucken (the Count's son!).

*Luna* moves at a quick pace, propelled by witty dialogue, identifiable characters and sharply crafted, cute artwork. The action sequence at the beginning of the book, where Luna gets caught infiltrating the Count's stronghold, is especially eye-catching. I hope we see more of Luna in action in the future, though it's just as fun to watch her reactions during even the smallest encounter with the guy she's crushing on. This first shoujo entry from newcomers Seven Seas is an altogether entertaining read.

—*Chris Johnston*

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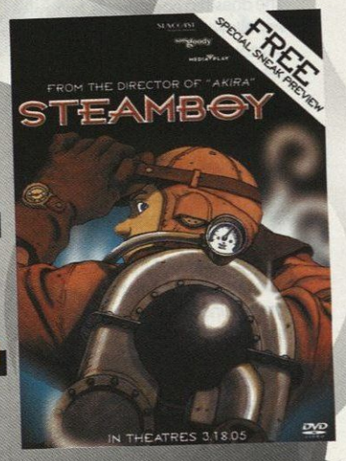
Pick Up Some

# steam

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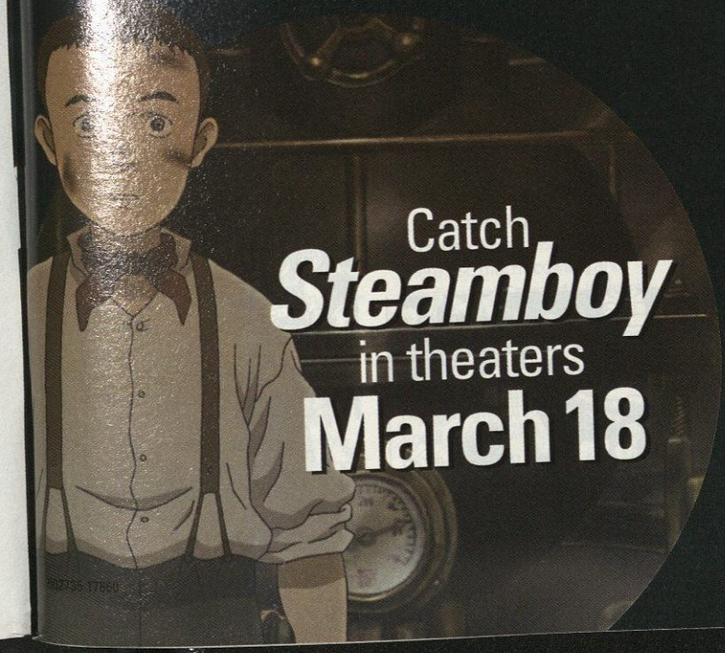


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# GALS! VOLUME 1

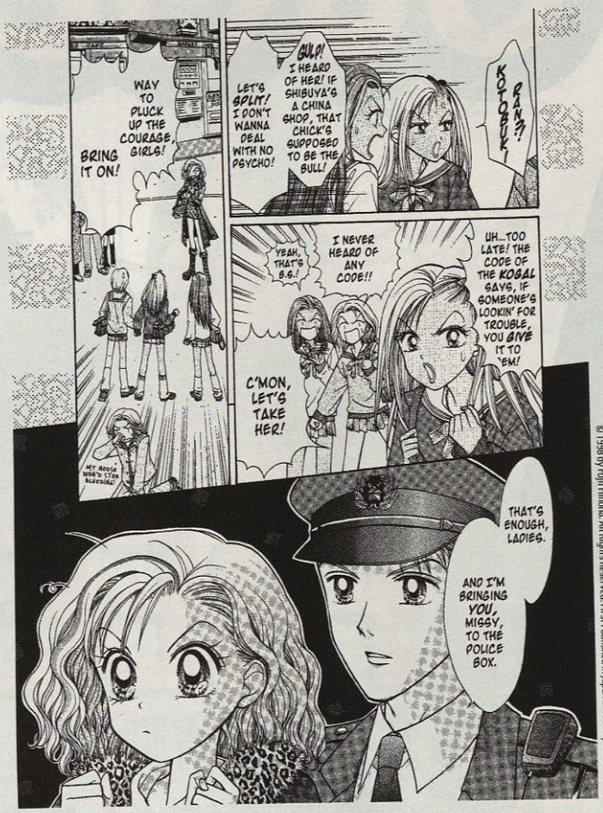
## FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY

**REBELLIOUS *KOGAL*** (think valley girl with an edge) Ran Kotobuki has one goal in life—to live it up. She and her materialistic friends roam Japan's posh Shibuya shopping district, indulging in all of life's greatest pleasures and leaving disaster in their wake. Ran's family, a long line of law-abiding policemen and women, is none too happy with the girl's destructive direction in life. So her father comes up with a way to get the girl to change: bribery. If she does ten good deeds, he'll raise her allowance. Being a die-hard fan of money, our rambunctious gal sets out to right wrongs and earn that yen.

Each rapid-fire vignette in this first volume of ***GALS!*** is funnier than the last. For example, a run-in with a purse-snatcher gets her punched in the nose and framed for one of the criminal's many misdeeds. With a little help from her family, Ran escapes trouble and plots revenge. But her undying desire for cash convinces her to help the poor crook escape an abusive relationship.

The stories play out pretty comically as Ran's solution to any given problem is usually to beat someone up (physically or verbally). There's also some misguided teenage romance tossed in for good measure, as Ran strikes up a relationship with a boy from across town. As you reach the end of the book, you'll want to see more, but it's not the type of manga where you'll have to buy multiple volumes to make sense of a sweeping story. Its light, fun tone and zany situations are all the hooks you'll need to come back for Volume 2.

*—Jennifer M. Contino*


WAY TO PLUCK UP THE COURAGE, GIRLS!
BRING IT ON!
LET'S SPLIT! I DON'T WANNA DEAL WITH NO PSYCHO!
GULP! I HEARD OF HER! IF SHIBUYA'S A CHINA SHOP, THAT CHICK'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE BULL!
KOTOBUKI
RAN?!
YEAH, THAT'S B.G.!
I NEVER HEARD OF ANY CODE!!
UH...TOO LATE! THE CODE OF THE KOGAL SAYS, IF SOMEONE'S LOOKIN' FOR TROUBLE, YOU GIVE IT TO 'EM!
C'MON, LET'S TAKE HER!
THAT'S ENOUGH, LADIES.
AND I'M BRINGING YOU, MIGGY, TO THE POLICE BOX.

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AVAILABLE
February 2005

PUBLISHER
CMX

RATING
T (Teen)

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# Monster Collection VOLUME 1

## YOU'LL WANNA CATCH 'EM ALL

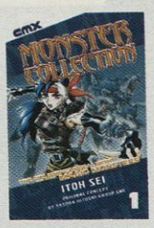
**THERE SIMPLY ISN'T** an abundance of solid fantasy anime out there. For every ***Slayers*** or ***Record of Lodoss War***, there's a score of wannabe titles. Somehow, manga picks up the slack where anime falls short. Based on a story by ***Lodoss*** creator Hitoshi Yasuda, ***Monster Collection*** is a satisfying bit of fantasy entertainment.

***Monster Collection*** is a blend of action, sex appeal and comedy—think of it as a post-pubescent ***Slayers***. The lead character, Kasche Arbadel, is an exceptionally talented summoner. She can call holy beasts to fight for her, but her exuberance usually causes a ruckus.

The university she attends doubles as a repository of ancient artifacts, and when a powerful idol is nabbed, it's up to her to get it back. Of course, she's soon swept into a lengthy quest to get the prize back from a powerful evildoer. On her journey, she saves a stricken (and sexy) monster, exorcises trapped spirits, and joins forces with a couple of rakish companions—and that's just in the first volume.

Kasche's story is rendered in bold and dynamic fashion, although artist Sei Itoh rarely gets experimental with the layout. Little touches, like an imaginary lesbian love scene, pop to life and are rendered in frighteningly devoted detail. Make no mistake, this book is not for the kiddies. ***Monster Collection*** has gore and sexiness, but it also has the swagger to pull it off without looking sleazy. CMX's exceptionally smooth English text is a big reason the book successfully navigates that fine line. Result: ***Monster Collection*** is a rollicking, funny and sexy fantasy title for mature teens.

*—Christian Nutt*




AVAILABLE
March 2005

PUBLISHER
CMX

RATING
M (Mature)

# The Tarot Café VOLUME 1

## IT'S IN THE CARDS

**IT'S ONE THING** for a girl to be great-looking, but fashionable and clairvoyant too—now that's just unfair.

In ***The Tarot Café***, we meet Pamela, a dazzling gothic beauty with the gift of foresight. She's the owner of a magical café where customers come to have their tarot cards read and the future revealed. Naturally, her clientele can be a touch eccentric, ranging from sexy supernatural spirits to creatures of the night.

In short self-contained chapters, different characters visit Pamela, each with a new story to tell. In one touching yarn, she talks to a wish-fulfilling cat who granted the request of a young girl he has fallen in love with. Even though the girl loves another boy, Pamela reveals that the cat will selflessly help his beloved, at the cost of his own life. The stories Pamela hears range from poignant allegories to tragedies and lighthearted tales. With such a diverse mélange of material and loads of gorgeous gothic characters, ***The Tarot Café*** is a gripping read.

*—Laura Geist*

AVAILABLE
March 2005

PUBLISHER
TOKYOPOP Inc.

RATING
13+

© 2002 by Sang Sun Park/SIGONGSA

# Cromartie High School VOLUME 1

NEWTYPE USA BOOK OF THE MONTH

## HEAD OF THE CRASS

**THE ANNALS OF** manga in Japan are littered with the dregs of modern education—the dropouts, druggies and delinquents. You see them on *Cromartie High School's* cover—drawn in thick, accusatory lines, flailing away at each other's throats. You may think this is some kind of Japanese social-crisis exposé, but this isn't hard-boiled adolescent drama; it's an absurdly hilarious manga that excavates completely new depths of out-and-out silliness.

Takashi Kamiyama, the protagonist (more or less), is a typical clean-cut student who winds up enrolling at the infamous Cromartie High under murky circumstances. How tough is this school for juvenile delinquents? It's so tough that when Kamiyama drops a pencil on the floor, the enormous lummox next to him picks it up...and eats it, chewing the entire mass into a pulp in one go. As an experiment, Kamiyama empties his entire pencil case in front of the guy, who responds by stuffing it all into his mouth, running to a corner...and retching it back up. Now *that's* tough.

The humor in ***Cromartie*** revolves around an unbelievably off-kilter cast of characters, who are introduced one after another in this volume. There's Yutaka, the "boss" of the class who tries to hide his tendency to get violently carsick on swing rides. There's Freddie, a silent exchange student who looks like a cross between Queen front man Freddie Mercury and a 19th-century prizefighter. There's Mechazawa, a tall-mouthed natural leader who's so self-respected that no one has the heart (or is it brains?) to point out that he's actually a robot. It says something about author Eiji Nonaka's characterization skills that a full-sized gorilla is somehow the most normal member of Kamiyama's class.

Being a pure gag manga, ***Cromartie*** doesn't have much of a plot. Whatever story exists is there to provide a base for the characters to play off each other, ***Seinfeld***-style. During one cram session, things deteriorate after one student can't solve simple arithmetic, even when it's presented in word problems involving student brawls and explicit videos. The solution Kamiyama comes up with? Learn by doing—which means going to a rival school, kicking ass, then promptly getting suspended and missing the exam.

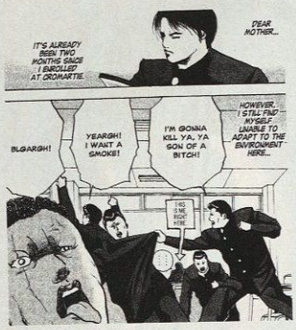
Even when the punch line's obvious, Nonaka's fervent application of the absurd keeps his comic rolling. There's so much scowling and shouting that ***Cromartie*** looks remarkably like all the high school gangbanger productions it's parodying. But in the end, this is more than a tired parody; it's a manga with so much laugh-out-loud humor that you'll wonder why school couldn't be more like this in real life.

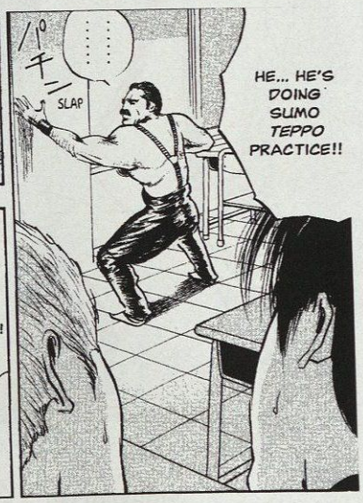
*—Kevin Gifford*

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005

**PUBLISHER**
ADV Manga

**RATING**
13+


IT'S ALREADY BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE I ENROLLED AT CROMARTIE.
DEAR MOTHER...
BLGARGH!
YEARGH! I WANT A SMOKE!
I'M GONNA KILL YA, YA SON OF A BITCH!
HOWEVER, I STILL FIND MYSELF UNABLE TO ADAPT TO THE ENVIRONMENT HERE...




### >> HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE SPACE

***Cromartie*** is manga artist Eiji Nonaka's first breakout hit in Japan, but he's actually been drawing gag comics for over a decade. His best-known previous work is ***Kachou Baka Ichidai***, which is basically ***Cromartie*** in an office setting—in fact, Nonaka frequently uses old ***Kachou*** characters as Cromartie High students.

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What's a Pretty Boy With Mutant Abilities to Do When He's A Wanted Man?

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PREVIEW

# Rise of the Kasai

## FEEL THE TRIBE VIBE

Images provided by Sony Computer Entertainment America

| AVAILABLE | SYSTEM |
|---|---|
| March 2005 | PS2 |
| PUBLISHER | RATING |
| Sony | Pending |

**RELEASED IN THE SUMMER** of 2002, Sony's ***Mark of Kri*** was one of the first games to successfully tackle multi-adversary combat in 3D space, and its art style quickly separated it from the pack. Although it wasn't a commercial smash, the game pulled in its share of fans, who've been eagerly awaiting a sequel. After all, ***Ratchet & Clank***—another Sony-published franchise—has had three installments since ***Kri*** was released. Mercifully, ***Rise of the Kasai*** will descend upon us this spring.

Main character Rau and his raven-like spirit guide return to continue the story from the first game. You'll go both ten years into the future and ten into the past to investigate Rau's own death. The protagonist is reunited with Tati, his sister and the black sheep of the family, who is now playable. But that's not all: The siblings' surrogate father and trainer, the massive Baumusu, gets in on the action—as does cool-as-a-cucumber elder Griz. With unique move sets and weapons for each character, this formidable foursome can tackle any adversary—and will often do so in tandem, thanks to some inventive A.I. cooperation.

***Kasai's*** gameplay retains ***Kri's*** unique mechanics. In order to lock onto enemies, you have to shoot a laser-like cursor at them using the right analog stick. You can fight up to three baddies simultaneously; each one is assigned to one of the four PS2 face buttons. When only one foe is locked on, the two remaining buttons become modifiers, drawing out some creative combos. From early footage, it seems that ***Kasai*** will retain ***Kri's*** bloody, graphic combat.

Stealth plays a larger role in this sequel, as each character has an unarmed, sneakier way to attack. Tati is especially adept at the more subtle approach, and she can camouflage herself to become virtually invisible to enemies. Like Rau's ability to see through the eyes of his fine feathered friend Kuzo, Tati can view things from the perspective of fallen foes.

***The Mark of Kri*** was an excellent but overlooked title. Hopefully this time around ***Kasai*** will find its way to gamers' collections—provided the final product lives up to its predecessor's standards, of course.

*—Justin Leeper*

### >> RAU ROCKS!

Just think, if ***Rise of the Kasai*** became popular enough for a motion picture to be made, The Rock would be perfect for the role—the buff physique, the dark complexion, even the tribal tattoo are all there!

## >> MINI-PREVIEWS

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# Digimon World 4

| AVAILABLE | SYSTEM |
|---|---|
| Spring 2005 | GC, PS2, Xbox |
| PUBLISHER | RATING |
| Bandai | Pending |

**THE *DIGIMON* WORLD** is going haywire. Its connection to the real world has been severed, and an evil, confusing new world has taken its place. Grab your favorite Digimon and begin a quest to find out who—or what—is behind this madness.

***Digimon World 4*** features 16 different Digimon for your gaming enjoyment. During the course of the adventure, you'll be able to customize said Digital Monsters with new weapons, armor and items that will directly affect their skills and other attributes.

The coolest part, though, is that you'll be able to play alongside up to three of your friends as you work through the game. After all, saving the world is a pretty big job. Why do it alone?

*—Greg Sewart*

# Mr. Driller 2

| AVAILABLE | SYSTEM |
|---|---|
| Spring 2005 | GBA |
| PUBLISHER | RATING |
| Namco | E (Everyone) |

**AFTER THE FIRST** ***Driller*** game was released for the original PlayStation and Sega Dreamcast back in 1999, it seemed as though Namco forgot about the pink-clad hero in the sky. That ***Driller*** dry spell is over now, thanks to the new DS game, ***Drill Spirits***, and this, the first ***Driller*** sequel, ***Mr. Driller 2***.

***Driller 2*** (which came out a few years ago in Japan) continues the block-breaking gameplay of the original. As Susumu Hori (the titular Mr. Driller), you dig into a pit filled with multi-colored blocks. Digging causes the higher layers of blocks to fall. If like-colored blocks connect, they disappear, often resulting in huge combos.

In addition to the addictive gameplay, ***Driller 2*** also features a second playable character, Anna Hottenmeyer. Puzzle game enthusiasts should really dig this one.

*—Phil Theobald*

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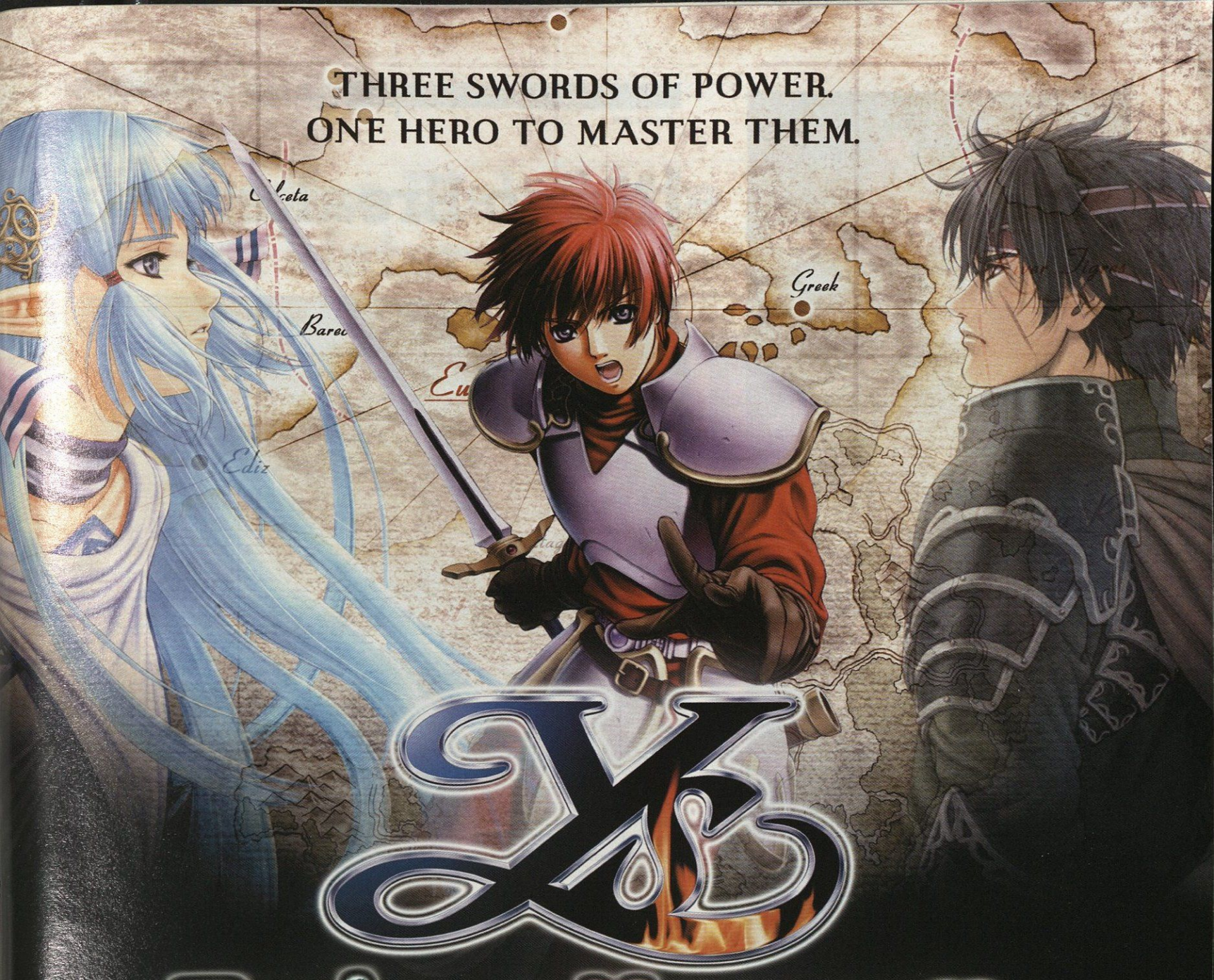


# Ys
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# Nano Breaker

## YOU AND YOUR PLASMA SWORD PAINT THE TOWN RED

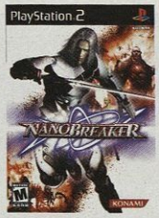
**WHILE *NANO BREAKER*** may look like a new action franchise for Konami, it's more like a ***Castlevania*** sequel in futuristic clothing. You see, Koji Igarashi, the man behind such vampire-slaying ***Castlevania*** hits as PS1's ***Symphony of the Night***, GBA's ***Aria of Sorrow*** and PS2's ***Lament of Innocence***, is at the helm of this title. Without the shackles of that series holding him back, Igarashi (better known as IGA) can be a little more creative in ***Nano Breaker***. The end result is a worthy successor, though one that won't blow you away.

***Nano Breaker*** features some of the most intuitive combat you'll ever encounter. Main character Jake Warren wields a wicked plasma sword that isn't bound to one shape or form. Using a combination of the vertical and horizontal slash buttons, along with a modifier, Jake can unleash crazy attacks for days. His weapon even morphs into an axe or a spear. It sure beats mashing the same button over and over again.

Combo-making comes into play when you pick up chips—which let you customize strings to further enhance and prolong your attacks. A capture button allows you to pull evil minions toward you for slicing, or bring innocents closer to your shielding bosom—you can also use it to move inanimate objects to solve block puzzles.

Puzzles break up the combat, but the platforming elements just might break up your patience. As the camera is self-moving, it's tough to line up jumps. They look 2D thanks to the view, but the 3D space results in a lot of missed leaps. As you get deeper into the game, you'll run into several stages that require pinpoint jumping—some of which involve speed in addition to accuracy. That could lead to you throwing your controller to the ground and doing some jumping of your own...on top of your PS2.

The sword provides some truly dynamic visual effects. Its plasma blade seems to cut through time and provides some very cool eye candy. When you strike foes, gallons of liquid fly around. While this can't be considered blood, since enemies are more machine than mammal, it's still red and very splattery.




**AVAILABLE**
Now

**PUBLISHER**
Konami

**SYSTEM**
PS2

**RATING**
M [Mature]

***Nano Breaker*** is on par with ***Lament of Innocence***, though it suffers from similar weaknesses. The PS2 finally has a game with combat bliss to rival ***Ninja Gaiden*** on Xbox, but its platforming frustration almost spoils the fun. If you're prepared to add a few tears to the blood and sweat, however, you'll have a nano-tastic time.

*—Justin Leeper*

### >> NANO VS. LAMENT

How do IGA's two PS2 titles compare? Besides the obvious themes—semi-futuristic vs. gothic—***Nano Breaker*** is more linear than ***Lament of Innocence***. However, its level design is a bit more creative. ***Nano's*** combat is even deeper than ***Castlevania's***, but it makes you jump through more [frustrating] hoops. The addition of gallons of goop gives ***Nano Breaker*** the mature edge.

# Finny the Fish & the Seven Waters

## SMOKED KIPPER FOR TEA

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**MAYBE THEY WANTED** a break from all the fishing and farming simulators they normally release. Maybe they felt remorse for sending countless polygonal wrigglers to the virtual barbecue. Regardless, ***Finny the Fish*** is here, and it already qualifies as one of the strangest releases in recent memory—almost as odd as the almighty ***Katamari Damacy*** (it's for PS2, go buy it if you haven't yet).

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005
**PUBLISHER**
Natsume
**SYSTEM**
PS2
**RATING**
E (Everyone)

Finny (i.e. you) is a small green fish caught up in extraordinary circumstances. A sinister darkness is spreading over the world's seas, and after a suspiciously rudimentary exam, the kappa that lords over the local swimming hole has chosen you to visit the other watery masters and find a solution. From the player's point of view, this involves swimming around a fairly vast seascape, filled with hidden items to find, human detritus to poke around in, and assorted other fish to eat. No, ***Finny*** is not a game for the squeamish—you can chomp down on dozens of creatures, wailing away at the analog stick to beat your prey into submission, and it's all recorded in a neat little collection accessible off the pause menu. Not everything is as it seems, though. Some of those little minnows are actually lures, and if you nibble one, you'll need to whip around like a distressed pike to snap the line before you're reeled in.

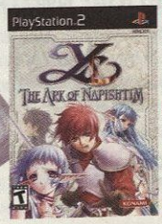
It may sound violent, but ***Finny*** is actually a mellow, laid-back experience. The audio and visuals combine perfectly to have a soothing effect on the soul, and the gameplay lends itself to hour-long stints here and there—quick to get into and immediately rewarding. Pretty weird, yes, but fun all the same.

*—Kevin Gifford*

# Ys: The Ark of Napishtim

## OLD-SCHOOL AND PROUD OF IT

**IF YOU FANCY** yourself a fan of old-school adventure games—we're talking Super NES era here—***The Ark of Napishtim*** was made for you. You'll find no constant fiddling with menus here. No massive inventory to manage. No confusing stat-point distribution. All you'll find is a nice, long, simple quest that involves swinging your sword, casting a few spells, and encountering some downright huge bosses in serious need of a whuppin'.




**AVAILABLE**
February 2005
**PUBLISHER**
Konami
**SYSTEM**
PS2
**RATING**
T (Teen)

***Ys*** (that's "ease") is an overhead adventure game continuing the story of the nigh-legendary series that became famous on NEC's TurboGrafx-16 in the early '90s. This time, the redheaded hero Adol has been sucked into the great vortex, and finds himself in a strange land filled with racial tension. But all you'll really want to do is move through the game world killing every hostile creature you encounter.

If ***Napishtim*** has a downside, it's the age issue. While new to the PS2, it's actually an old PC game, and it's easy to tell at times, considering how bland a few of the screens look. But ***Ys*** isn't an ugly game by any stretch of the imagination. Some of the scenes—especially the towns you'll visit—look pretty spectacular. And the beautifully animated bosses are quite impressive when they fill the entire screen.

***The Ark of Napishtim*** won't win RPG of the year or anything, but it's a solid adventure game that will remind you of a simpler time.

*—Greg Sewart*

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# Musashi: Samurai Legend

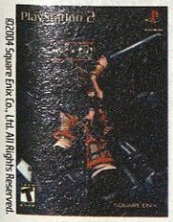
## WANNA SWING A KATANA?

**MUSASHI HAS A** long legacy to live up to. The famed samurai is world-renowned, and his first video game exploit (***Brave Fencer Musashi*** on PS1) was widely lauded. His PS2 debut doesn't quite reach legendary status, as it's plagued by a few fun-reducing problems, but the spiky-haired hero is still one sharp cat.

With Square Enix behind it, you know ***Musashi: Samurai Legend*** has a few RPG elements: leveling up, equipping items, etc. Still, this game is almost complete and total action. The bulk of your time is spent slicing robots to ribbons. Musashi relies on a quick katana but also finds a number of sub-weapons along his way—for when he needs to pack a little more power.

Think that's the extent of the kid's arsenal? Of course not! For starters, the ability to duplicate the powers bad guys use on you is a very cool feature that returns from ***Brave Fencer Musashi***. This time, the abilities are more along the lines of added standard attacks (combos, circular slashes), rather than the wacky powers gained on the PS1 game. Further testing your heroic aptitude, you're occasionally required to carry damsels to safety. It makes you get creative in dealing with enemies. Try tossing her high into the air and taking a swing before she lands safely in your arms. You stud, you.

While these all make the countless combative conquests more thrilling, the end-of-level payoffs—boss battles—leave a little to be desired. These behemoths are almost too big and scary for their own good, as the camera struggles when Musashi goes in for the kill. You end up looking at scaly monster buttocks more than you'd really care to. Not that it's a bad thing to take your eyes off Musashi every once in a while—his sports bra and low-rise jeans combo wasn't the wisest choice in attire. He was evidently summoned by the princess on laundry day.



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**AVAILABLE**
March 2005

**PUBLISHER**
Square Enix

**SYSTEM**
PS2

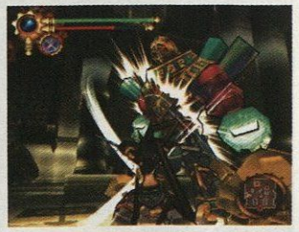
**RATING**
T (Teen)

While ***Musashi: Samurai Legend's*** nonstop action will keep you gritting your teeth for hours, and the manga-shading spruces up the game's average graphics, it doesn't cut to the core of video game greatness. It can't compete with Square Enix's own catalog of titles in terms of gameplay depth, story and characters. However, the action is tight as a guitar string, and it will make beautiful music for combat-savvy swordsmen.

*—Justin Leeper*

### >> SQUARE'S SPIKES AND SWORDS

Musashi is far from the first Square Enix protagonist to feature crazy hair and a huge blade. ***Chrono Trigger's*** silent star, ***Vagrant Story's*** Ashley Riot and ***Final Fantasy VII's*** Cloud Strife all sported a memorable coiffure and some sharp accoutrements.



# Kessen III

## YOUR OWN PRIVATE NOBUNAGA

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**YOU WILL BE** forgiven, in this age when another so-called video game "blockbuster" hits store shelves about every two weeks, if the ***Kessen*** series hasn't crossed your mind lately. The original game, which launched concurrently with the PlayStation 2 in 2000, was a strategic simulation unlike anything console owners had seen before—it featured hundreds of detailed Japanese soldiers thundering across the plains, stabbing each other with spears, all to a soundtrack that would sound more at home in a ***Godzilla*** film than a samurai epic. It was amazing to watch, but it wasn't particularly interactive—more a PS2 showcase than a game you'd want to play for long.

***Kessen III***, released after a three-year drought of new titles in the series, does a great deal to shake off this negative image. As before, the game lets you play out historic battles in Asian history, this time focusing on the rise and fall of legendary Japanese warlord Oda Nobunaga. This entry, though, is very different: Borrowing a page or two from KOEI's own ***Dynasty Warriors*** series, ***Kessen III*** lets you move units around and attack enemies directly, giving the game a much more action-oriented feel than before. In other words, if you want to give a stinking enemy officer what-for, just run your unit up to his and bash the Square button until all his troops are gone. Dead simple.

**AVAILABLE** February 2005
**PUBLISHER** KOEI
**SYSTEM** PS2
**RATING** T (Teen)

Of course, if it really *were* that simple, Nobunaga wouldn't have been assassinated, right? Despite the new action bits, victory in ***Kessen III*** still requires detailed knowledge of your officers and the units at their disposal. Besides the button-bashing mentioned above, you also have officer skills at your fingertips, magical moves that range from restoring health to summoning mythical hellbeasts. Nearby allied units can join in on your attacks for extra firepower, and the troops even have special abilities (sort of like Musou moves in ***Dynasty Warriors***) that can trounce wimpier daimyo in one or two hits.

Sound like your enemies don't have a chance? You're right, sort of. On the lowest difficulty level, it's almost impossible to lose as long as you build a half-decent strategy beforehand. Despite that, it's a game you'll want to make your way through at least once. The graphics (complete with two hours of wonderfully rendered cutscenes) constantly amaze, and while the older ***Kessens*** had more troops onscreen at once, the chaotic feel of 16th-century warfare is spot-on. It's a different beast from the first two games, but it's one you'll want sleeping by your feet in very short order.

—*Kevin Gifford*

### >> MUSICAL MAJESTY

The music in ***Kessen III*** sounds like a mix of old ***Godzilla*** themes and the title tunes from the *taiga* samurai dramas played on NHK every year. It makes sense when you realize the composer is Reijiro Koroku, who's had extensive experience with both.

## >> MINI-REVIEWS

### Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament

**AVAILABLE** February 2005
**PUBLISHER** Namco
**SYSTEM** GBA
**RATING** E (Everyone)

**IF YOU MISSED** out on the previous ***Klonoa*** games for Game Boy Advance, PlayStation and PlayStation 2, you're missing out on something wonderful. They're all outstanding side-scrolling platform games that fans of the genre owe it to themselves to seek out and play. And hey, Klonoa himself is a cute character whose on-screen antics are sure to please.

***Klonoa 2*** continues Klonoa's adventures in a game that's more puzzle-oriented than the console versions. As you traverse through the maze-like levels (or in this case, "Visions"), you must track down and collect three stars to open the exit. You also have to find scattered crystals and a sun, which improve your overall grade on the Vision.

With its bright, colorful graphics, terrific character design, tight control and solid level design, ***Tournament*** is something that lovers of old-school games will definitely want to enter.

—*Phil Theobald*

### Sega Classics Collection

**AVAILABLE** March 2005
**PUBLISHER** Sega
**SYSTEM** PS2
**RATING** T (Teen)

**SEGA'S ATTEMPT TO** get aboard the classic compilation gravy train is a little different than efforts from the likes of Atari and Midway. Rather than slapping a bunch of old games on one disc and shoving it out the door, every title in ***Sega Classics*** has been given a 21st century facelift.

These reworked golden oldies cover a few different genres—the hack 'n' slash action of ***Golden Axe***; intense shooting of ***Alien Syndrome***; mind-bending puzzles in ***Columns***; and high-speed racing with ***Monaco GP***, ***OutRun*** and ***Virtua Racing***.

The quality of each remastered piece varies from mediocre to excellent, which might have doomed this package if not for one game—***Virtua Racing***. This stellar, nigh arcade-perfect version of the classic 3D racing game is easily worth the $20 price tag alone.

—*Greg Sewart*

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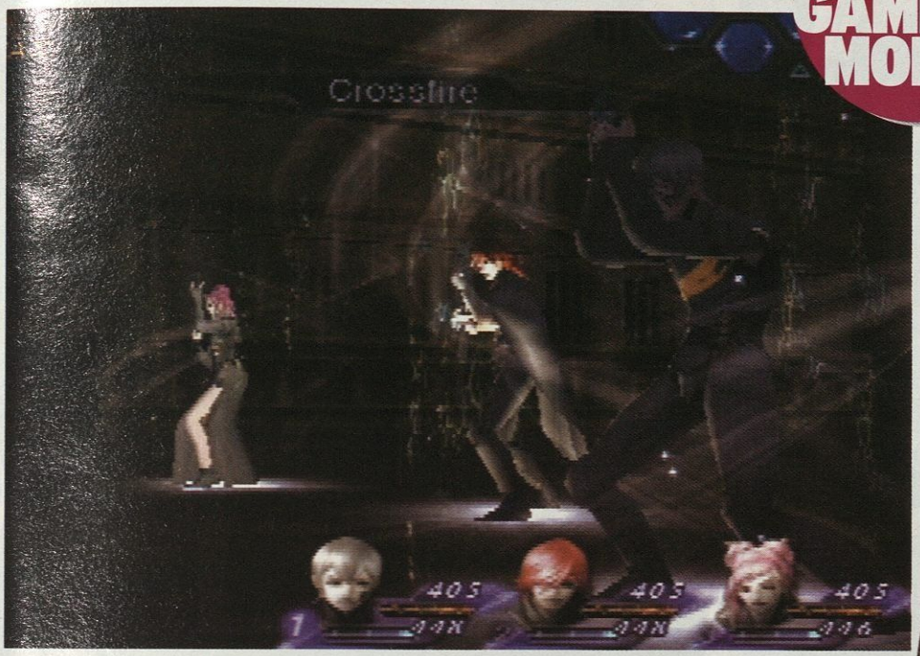
# Digital Devil Saga: Avatar Tuner

THE EVILS OF TECHNOLOGY

NEWTYPE USA GAME OF THE MONTH



**LAST YEAR'S *Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne*** was a beautiful-looking RPG, but gamers drawn in by its style might have been scared away by its super-hardcore level of complexity (which is a good thing in our eyes, but hey...). In a way, it's a shame Atlus couldn't have released ***Digital Devil Saga*** first—it has all the stylistic brilliance of ***Nocturne***, but a simplified combat system and greater emphasis on story give this game a better chance of easing the ***Final Fantasy***-loving crowd into the harsh world of ***Megami Tensei.***

And it is a harsh world, not just in terms of difficulty but also in sheer bleakness. There's a constant rain from the metallic yellow sky, most everything seems washed-out and bled of its vitality, and the tribal warfare to ascend to Nirvana has recently taken a grisly turn as people's inner demons emerge and start devouring each other.

Playing as Serph, leader of the Embryon tribe, involves eating your enemies as part of the gameplay. You learn new abilities by equipping mantras and gaining Atma points; when you've gotten enough points to master the mantra, the skills contained within are yours to keep. Defeating enemies will earn some Atma points, but the big Atma rewards come when you weaken an enemy enough to use a Hunt command to finish it off and chow down. To effectively develop your party, you'll balance the HP-draining Hunt commands, MP-draining magic, and other automatic-use abilities on your limited roster of assigned skills.

The system rewards strategy and careful planning while still being far more streamlined than the daunting demon summoning/contract/fusion system of ***Nocturne***—in fact, the branching paths of the mantra assignment screen look a little bit like ***Final Fantasy X's*** Sphere Grid. Another parallel to ***FF*** is the beautiful cutscenes that pop up with more regularity than in the austere ***Nocturne***. They look great and accomplish a lot. In small, controlled strokes, they establish an entire (dys)functional world: The cinemas never beat you over the head with explanations, but instead offer fairly subtle hints and trust the player to understand the meaning.

There are a couple of flaws, such as a high encounter rate and a tendency for the dungeon design to be boxy, but on balance this is the most accessible game in the series to hit American shores—yet it maintains the distinct Megaten flavor, meaning there's nothing else like it out there. If you still haven't discovered what all the fuss is over this series, give ***Digital Devil Saga*** a taste, and you'll come back for more.

*—Nich Maragos*

**AVAILABLE**
March 2005

**PUBLISHER**
Atlus

**SYSTEM**
PS2

**RATING**
M (Mature)

### » DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

There are small character quirks in the design of your crew that speak volumes about what kind of people they are even before the Atma goes to work. Their personalities emerge gradually (the eyes really are the windows to the soul in this game), but Argilla's facial scar hints at her vulnerable nature, and Gale's hood represents how carefully guarded his thoughts are.

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# Girmos

KAIJU-A-GO-GO

**TOKYO IS IN** trouble again. Girmos is a *kaiju* (monster) from the deep blue sea, and he's on a mission to thrash every last toy store and karaoke club in your favorite Japanese metropolis. Created and manufactured by Dream Rockets in association with Shono-Kikaku of Japan, this highly limited-edition toy features translucent blue vinyl with metallic silver and white trim. Only available through *Super7* magazine, Girmos is 9.75" tall by 7" long by 5.5" wide and will cost you a blithe $55.

WWW.SUPER7STORE.COM

# Gloomy Teddy

KILLING YOU SOFTLY

**CUTE, CUDDLY AND** crazy violent, the latest creation from Gloomy Bear artist Mori Chack is the manifestation of your childhood fears...adorned in pink fur. Gloomy Teddy even comes with a choke-chain necklace so you can keep this mischievous marauder in check. For a mere $39.95, he can be yours. He's more fun than therapy!

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Image courtesy of Kidrobot

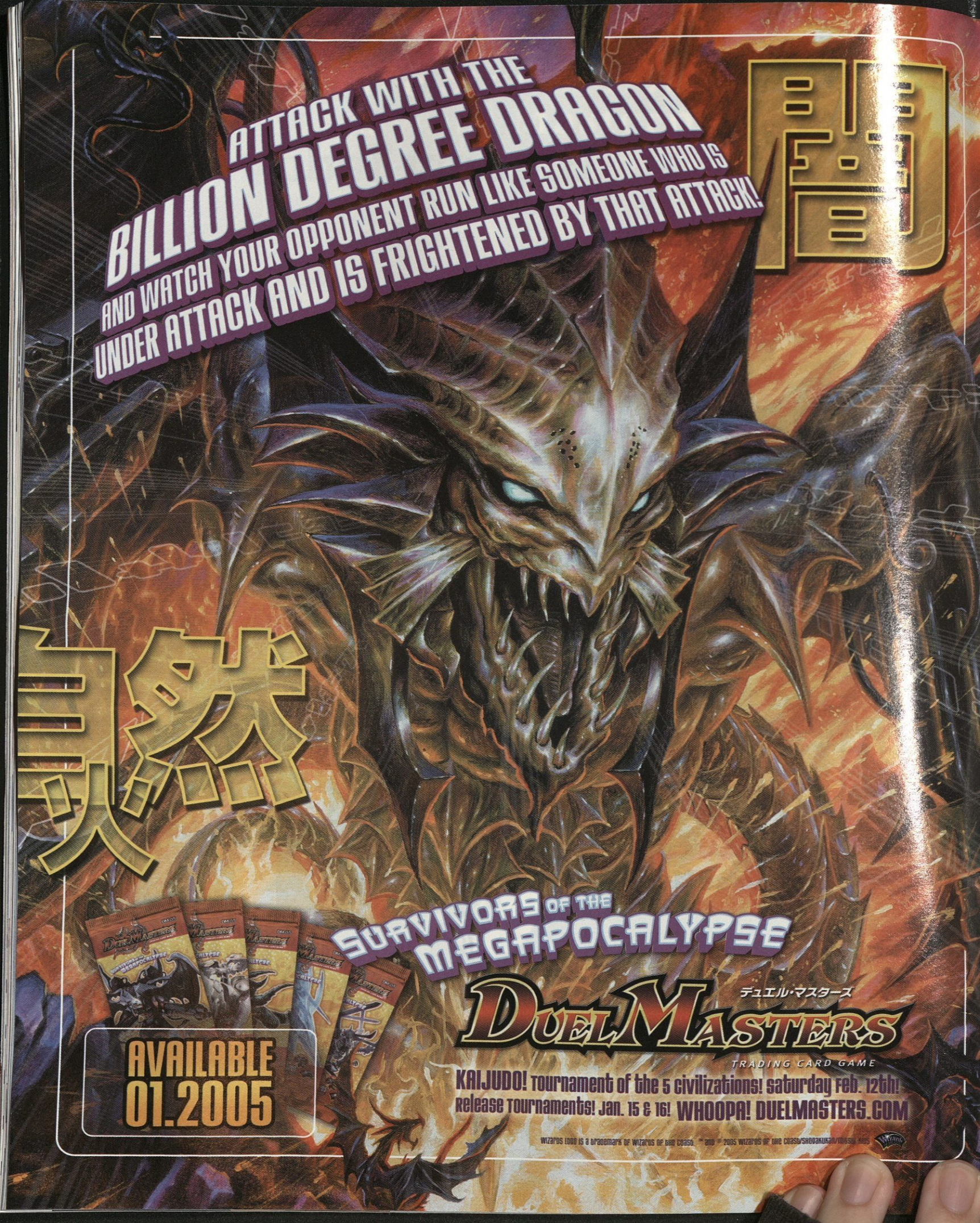
# Space Monkey Vinyl

WEAPONS OF MASS HYSTERIA

**FROM POPULAR UNDERGROUND** artist Dalek comes the 8" Space Monkey Vinyl in Green. Psychotic smiles and homicidal tendencies are the trademarks of this Earth-invading simian. Each figure comes with a butcher knife and mallet, clearly the preferred weapons of the cosmic age. One of four different color variations, Space Monkey in Green goes for $49.95 and is limited to 444 pieces.

WWW.KIDROBOT.COM

Images courtesy of Kidrobot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## Mechazawa Plush

ROBOTS ARE PEOPLE TOO

**MECHAZAWA CERTAINLY LOOKS** like a robot, but to the delinquents of Cromartie High, he's just one of the boys. This plush version of the smack-talking, chain-smoking gang leader is the perfect way to celebrate the awesome oddity of your favorite new comedy-manga-turned-anime addiction, ***Cromartie High School***. Available at specialty shops and Suncoast locations nationwide for $17.99.

## Trigun: Gazelle

SPEAK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG GUN

**DESIGNED BY *TRIGUN*** creator Yasuhiro Nightow, Gazelle the Peacemaker captures all that is cool about the popular artist's manga-meets-Wild-West character designs. Looming large at 9" tall, the figure boasts 30 points of articulation, providing a host of posing possibilities. Cooler still, the giant gun breaks down to reveal missiles and assorted gadgets. If you already think Gazelle's tough-as-nails aesthetic is mind-blowing, get this: His display base includes the ravaged head and torso of one of his enemies (not shown). The Gazelle character was created specifically for Nightow and manufacturer Kaiyodo's Trigun/Toy Tribe line, and it will be available this month at comic book and specialty stores for $49.99.

Image courtesy of Diamond Comics

Image courtesy of Diamond Comics

## Range Murata Mini-Figures

RULE THE WORLD

**RANGE MURATA IS** one of the top illustrators in anime and games today, having crafted amazing character designs for ***Blue Submarine No. 6***, ***Last Exile*** and the PS2 game ***Spy Fiction***. Now you can own these 3D gems of Murata's mindscape based on his recent art collection, "Rule." Each figure measures between 2" and 4" tall and comes with a cozy-cool futuristic accessory. At $6.99 each, purchase the whole set at your favorite specialty store and dream about how much cooler your living room would be if Murata designed all your furniture.

# 1:12 Scale Scopedog

## A MAGNIFICENT WORK OF MECHA ART

***ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS*** is a hardcore sci-fi anime that first aired more than two decades ago. This timeless classic still enthralls fans with its complex plot, fascinating characters and awesome mechanical designs. And now, Yamato (a toy company best known for its stylish and fully transformable *Valkyrie* models) has released a magnificent replica of the *Scopedog*, the mecha of choice for the main character Chirico Cuvie, in whopping 1:12 scale (approx. 12 inches tall)!

This fully articulated model features many working joints, a highly detailed cockpit and a movable face cover. Because fan expectations run high for large-scale models like this, Yamato has gone the extra mile. It has a fully functional knee mechanism that allows you to pose the model in standby mode, the wheels integrated into the bottom of each foot actually turn, and the forearms are spring-loaded to throw punches!

The original parts were sculpted by Kenichi Nomoto, affectionately dubbed "Mr. Votoms." A figure of Chirico has been sculpted in the same 1:12 scale by Masaki Asai, widely known as an action figure aficionado! Unfortunately, the Chirico figure is not included with the *Scopedog* model.

The release of this 1:12 scale *Scopedog* model was one of the biggest pieces of model news last year in Japan, and it's expected to create a sensation when it becomes available in the US this May.

text by TAC YAMAMOTO

### ATM-09-ST Scopedog
**1:12 Scale**

**SCHEDULED FOR MAY 2005 RELEASE IN THE US FROM YAMATO USA**

In the show, the *Scopedog* was developed by Melkia (one of the most influential planets in the Gilgamesh Confederation), and it quickly became one of the primary weapons of the Gilgamesh army. It stands 3.8 meters tall and weighs 6.6 metric tons. The model is made chiefly of ABS and PVC plastics, but some joint parts are die-cast metal. It comes fully assembled and painted.

サンライズ

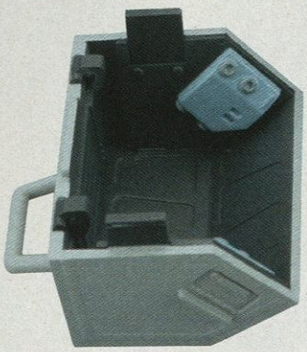
The internal mechanisms are very realistic. Most parts are made of ABS plastic, so they can be painted with conventional hobby paints to enhance their appearance. Some joints are made of die-cast metal to sustain added force at certain key pressure points.

## » ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS DVD MEMORIAL BOX

**K-T Figure Collection**

*Armored Trooper Votoms* is one of the most recognized realistic robot anime shows of all time, a testament to the potency of director Ryosuke Takahashi's unique vision. Bandai Visual has just released the DVD box set in Japan. It contains the entire TV series and four OVAs, a Kaiyodo-made action figure and a 220-page info booklet.

← The cockpit hatch opens, and the seat accommodates the Chirico figure (sold separately). The standby mode is completely represented, just like in the original design sketches. This is without a doubt the ultimate *Scopedog* model!

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# From the streets to the stars

## ANGELA'S JOURNEY FROM STREET PERFORMERS TO STELLVIA AND BEYOND

**STREET PERFORMING MAY** be the purest form of music. No pressure, no pretense, just you and the audience. Granted, most of your audience is in motion, catching no more than a few seconds of a particular song. But every once in a while, someone will stop and listen. Maybe they'll even buy a CD.

Atsuko and Katsu, the two members of angela (named after a Motley Crüe song), began their careers as street performers in Tokyo's Ikebukuro district. They gained fans one by one, but fate soon intervened. "The cops came and chewed us out," explains Atsuko. "So we had to move our act to Shinjuku. We were really sad about it, but anyway, we [ended up] in front of the Alta building in Shinjuku." The move turned out to be a good one, as a producer from STAR CHILD Records picked up one of their CDs as he was passing by.

"We got a call from the producer who'd been listening to our CD, and he wanted to know if we were interested in singing the theme song for ***Stellvia***. It was a huge surprise!" As it turns out, their newfound fan just happened to be a producer of the music for ***Neon Genesis Evangelion***, and "merry-go-round," the first track on the album he purchased, was inspired by the show. "It was one Katsu and I wrote after hearing ***Evangelion's*** 'Cruel Angel's Thesis' and talking about how much we wanted to make a song like that."

Clearly, the bridge between angela and their record deal with STAR CHILD is laced with luck. Atsuko admits, "Now that I think about it, it's an incredible coincidence that ['Cruel Angel's Thesis' happened to be put out by STAR CHILD Records. And if we hadn't had to back up and move our performance to Shinjuku, [none of this would've happened]."

But their success isn't just a product of chance. Atsuko and Katsu have worked hard to hone their unique sound. "My singing style has changed a lot in the past two or three years," Atsuko says of her booming, nearly yodeling vocals. "When we were recording, if I wasn't particularly emphasizing the falsetto or vibrato in my voice, Katsu—who directs my performances—would tell me to make it stand out more. I do feel I'd like to improve my singing, but on the other hand, I don't think vocal skill is everything." Katsu reveals his reasoning for the emphasis on Atsuko's voice, "Whenever we performed a song with a lot of falsetto, more people would stop to listen and buy our CDs. I think the appeal of Atsuko's voice is something we learned about naturally from watching people respond to it."

**"I would much rather be unique as a singer—someone who sings in a voice that has character..."**

Atsuko doesn't mind, though. "I would much rather be unique as a singer—someone who sings in a voice that has character and individuality to it." We're sold. In an industry of shrill, squeaky teens, angela's sound is a welcome respite.

"What would make me happiest is if people could hear my voice and immediately recognize us as angela," Atsuko concludes. With increased exposure and a few live performances already lined up for 2005 in the US, Atsuko just might get her wish.

—*Jonathan Mays*

### >> ANGELA VITALS

angela performs both the opening and ending themes to the space adventure series ***Stellvia***, available now on DVD in the US from Geneon Entertainment. These themes can be heard on the ***Stellvia*** soundtrack and angela's first US album, ***Voice of the Sky***—both available now (for more information, hit www.geneonanimemusic.com). More of their work is headed Stateside soon, both on the ***FAFNER*** soundtrack (slated for release on July 5) and a new album, ***angela I/O***, on September 6. Or catch them live at Seattle's Sakura-Con (April 8-10) or the Canadian National Expo in Toronto (August 27-29). Details can be found at www.sakuracon.org and hobbystar.com, respectively. For more details about the band, head to angela's STAR CHILD homepage at www.starchild.co.jp/artist/angela.

Special thanks to Kenji Okazaki at King Record Co., Ltd. for translations with our interviews.
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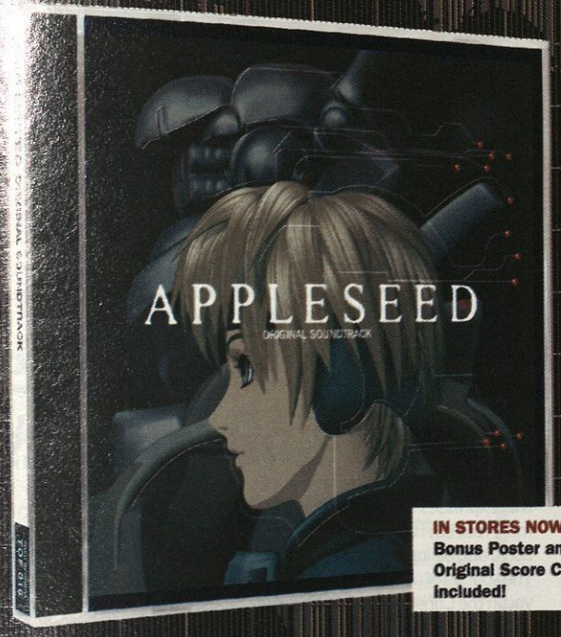


IN STORES NOW!
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# APPLESEED

## ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

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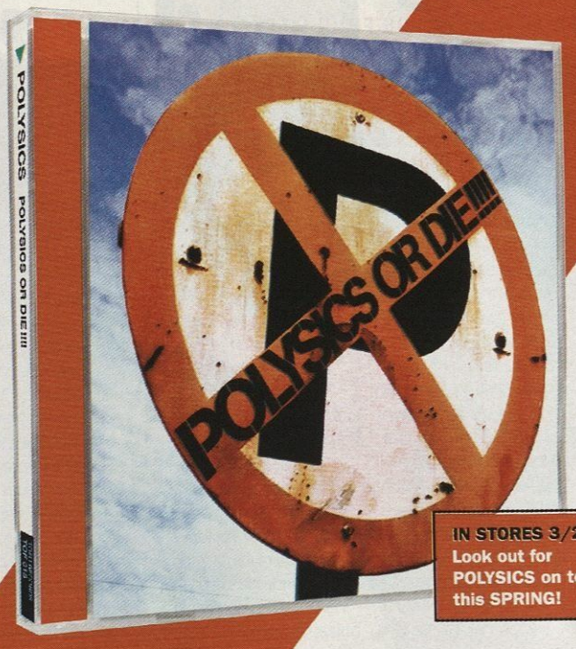


IN STORES 3/22!
Look out for POLYSICS on tour this SPRING!

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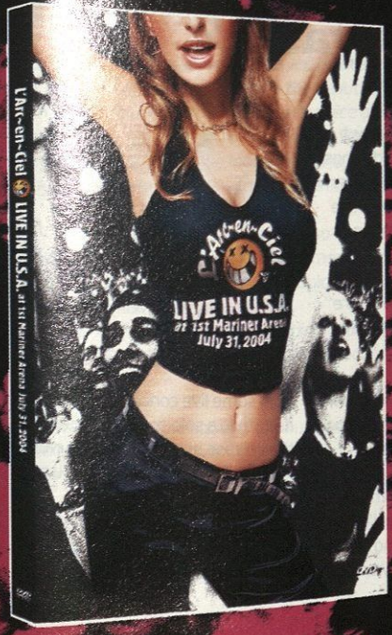
The definitive best of compilation from the most electrifying band in Japan featuring hits spanning their career as well as five previously unreleased tracks! TOF015



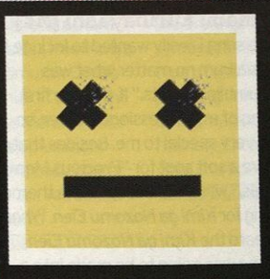

L'Arc~en~Ciel

# LIVE IN U.S.A.

## at 1st Mariner Arena July 31, 2004

## COMING SOON TO DVD!

The New Live DVD from the biggest rock band in Japan, featuring live footage from their ground-breaking US Performance at the 1st Mariner Arena in Baltimore! TOF 017



AVAILABLE NOW!

**SMILE**, the hit album from L'Arc~en~Ciel, features **READY STEADY GO** as heard on **Fullmetal Alchemist**!

TOF010

# Aiko Kayo's new singles include the theme song for *Samurai Gun*

## A CD A WEEK FOR FOUR WEEKS IN A ROW?!

Aiko Kayo was born December 11, 1985. Two versions of her first photo album ***PRETTY PRIVATE*** are now available in Japan. One is sold at convenience stores and bookstores, and the other is available on the Internet or at promotional events, concerts, etc. Last December, she performed a live concert exclusively for those who purchased all four of her most recent CD singles.

**ARTIST**
Aiko Kayo
**ALBUM**
traveller
**AVAILABLE**
Now in Japan

This single is the last of her single-a-week project. It's a cute love song with a pop melody and positive lyrics, sung with just a tinge of sadness. The limited edition comes with a cell phone strap and a whistle. (avex trax / AVCD-30664)

***IT'S BEEN OVER*** *a year since Aiko Kayo made her debut back in December 2003. To commemorate the first anniversary of her emergence onto the music scene—and also her December birthday—she released one CD single every week for four weeks in a row starting November 17! Let's find out what's up with this crazy release schedule!*

**Aiko Kayo (AK):** It'd been a while since my second single was released, so I decided to put out four singles in a row to show my many faces as an artist. The four songs all have a common theme—love.

*The first release of the four, "Fantasy," is a eurobeat (fast disco) number, a surprising new direction for the young artist, but remarkably well-suited to her!*

**AK:** It was my first eurobeat song and also my first opportunity to cover someone else's song. The arrangement was done by Dave Rodgers, the producer of the original song, and it turned out very cool.

*The second release is the soft ballad "Ienai Kotoba."*

**AK:** This song is really heartrending, and it was the easiest one for me to get into. I focused a lot on my facial expressions in the promotional video and on the CD cover. And did you notice that I was crying for the first time on a CD jacket?

*The third single is the invigorating "ring! Ring!! RING!!!"*

**AK:** It's actually a Christmas song that expresses how Santa Claus must feel, but I think the feeling could also be interpreted as love. The sounds of bells in the song put you in the Christmas mood.

*The last of the four singles, the fast-paced "traveller," was released in December 2004, marking a return to the Aiko we all know and love.*

**AK:** Even though I have many different faces, I chose this song to close out the four because in the end I wanted to show the true me. It's an up-tempo song with positive lyrics, so I think it'll really draw people in. I hope they'll be able to get hyped up about it at live concerts or at karaoke or wherever. I'll be glad if it cheers people up and gives them the energy to face the next day.

*Each single comes with different bonus merchandise, but there's a certain something that connects all four CDs. What is that "something"?*

**AK:** All of the jackets are connected by a red string (which in Japan represents lovers tied by fate). Collecting all four CD singles gets you a message. The string starts at my finger and ties me to you, the one who bought my CDs. That's the message!

*Between recordings, Aiko flew to Los Angeles for a photo shoot for her first official photo album.*

**AK:** I appear in a swimsuit for the first time in the photos. It shows me as I am—at the beach, on a cruise ship, shopping in town. I turned 19 in December, so this book shows the 18-year-old Aiko.

*Last year was a busy one for Aiko, not only as a singer, but also as a TV personality. She's already busy as a bee in 2005! Keep your eye on Aiko!*

text by AKIRA ENDO

Minami Kuribayashi was born June 11, 1976. She's known for voice acting and for singing the theme song to the TV anime ***Kimi ga Nozomu Eien***.

# Oldies and new hits—Minami Kuribayashi's best-of album *Overture*

***MINAMI KURIBAYASHI IS*** *very active as a voice actress and singer/songwriter. We'd like to introduce her best-of album, released last December in Japan. It's packed with memorable old songs and even a few new ones, so don't miss out!*

**Minami Kuribayashi (MK):** The song I really wanted to include in this album no matter what was "Rumbling hearts." It was the first song of my professional career, so it's very special to me. Besides that, I have a soft spot for "Precious Memories," which was used as the theme song for ***Kimi ga Nozomu Eien***. When I heard the ***Kimi ga Nozomu Eien*** game was going to be made into a TV anime, I got excited and decided right then and there that I'd be the one to write and sing the show's theme song! No one had even asked me to do the song at that point. So when my song was chosen out of a bunch of candidates, I was very happy!

*About half the songs on the album were made or recorded while she was still working part-time, and they bring back memories for her.*

**MK:** When I look back on those songs, some of the lyrics are pretty embarrassing, but you know, I just wrote whatever message I wanted to express back then. I feel those messages are kind of childish, but it's not a bad thing because it means I grew up. I didn't redo those old songs for this album. I kept the original versions on this best-of album because there's meaning for me in keeping the originals.

*Minami named the album "Overture" because it's an overture to her new path in life.*

**MK:** I'd like the people who've known me for a long time to enjoy revisiting these old songs, and for my new fans, I want them to get to know the old me. Also, there are a few things I want to try in the near future. I'd like to be able to sing while playing the piano, and as soon as I can, I want to hold some live concerts. I'll be happy if I can do a solo concert following the release of this best-of album. I'll keep trying harder to bring you even better music!

**ARTIST**
Minami Kuribayashi
**ALBUM**
Overture
**AVAILABLE**
Now in Japan

This rich and rewarding best-of album contains many theme songs used in anime and games, including ***Kimi ga Nozomu Eien*** and ***Muv-luv***. You'll be amazed by the wide variety of musical styles, from the peppy and energetic to the bold and expansive. (Lantis / LACA-5324)

text by NAOKO KAWASAKI

As both an actress and singer, Noriko performs all over Japan. She had a role in the mono-logue play *Ano Ko wa Doore* last December in Tokyo and Osaka.

# Noriko Ogawa reads the heartwarming *Velveteen Rabbit*

**ARTIST**
Noriko Ogawa

**ALBUM**
Fantasy Sound & Reading: Velveteen Rabbit

**AVAILABLE**
Now in Japan

***Veludo Usagi*** is the Japanese translation of ***The Velveteen Rabbit*** [by Margery Williams]. The famous fantasy story blends perfectly with Noriko's down-to-earth reading and Kajiura's soothing music, creating a wonderful and warm reading/listening experience. [Victor Entertainment / VICL-61556~7]

***NORIKO OGAWA IS*** *a popular actress and singer in Japan, and with this book-on-CD, she shares yet another talent with us. We asked about the inspiration for this new endeavor.*

**Noriko Ogawa (NO):** I like reading picture books, and I've always wanted to make a book-on-CD. ***The Velveteen Rabbit*** (***Veludo Usagi*** in Japan) is one of the books that I've kept on my bookshelf all these years. It's about a velveteen rabbit who wants to become real. The story is very touching, and I think it's the kind of tale anyone can enjoy. That's why I chose it.

*Even the experienced Noriko found reading a picture book for CD to be difficult because it was totally different from doing TV narration.*

**NO:** My goal was to make a book-on-CD that people could listen to over and over again and never get tired of. So I read the story as naturally as it was written. I didn't want to limit the imagination of the listener by coloring the story with my own reading. I just hope the CD reaches the hearts of many people of all ages.

*Picture books are usually accompanied by beautiful illustrations, but this book-on-CD is accompanied by the beautiful music of Yuki Kajiura. Her music blends with Noriko's pure voice and storytelling, augmenting the experience of* **The Velveteen Rabbit**. *The last scene is accompanied by "Velvet no Inori" (meaning "prayer of velvet"), a song composed by Kajiura with lyrics penned by Ogawa herself.*

**NO:** The song had this grand feel to it, so I wrote lyrics trying to preserve that feel—hoping to make it sentimental and warm at the same time. I wanted to make a song that would light a candle in your heart.

*She smiles and tells us that the recording of the story and songs went pretty well. You can see footage from the recording session on the enhanced CD.*

**NO:** What's enjoyable about this album is that you get a CD of me telling a story, and another CD of just Kajiura's music. I hope you'll listen to it whenever you feel the need to relax...

*Nothing is more rejuvenating than listening to a soft voice tell a heartwarming story, accompanied by relaxing music. Try it for yourself!*

text by NAOKO KAWASAKI

## MUSIC PICKS

ON SALE NOW IN JAPAN

### Daybreak

Kazumi Toyota

This is the debut single from singer/songwriter Kazumi Toyota. Her musical career began with a band she formed in high school. After studying in England, she became active as a model, and her talent seems limitless. She sings the hopeful "Daybreak" with an inimitable evocative style, and in the up-tempo "Yokan" (also included), she captures the magical feeling of discovering something extraordinary amidst the drudgery of daily life. Instrumental versions of each song are also included on the disc.

Imperial Records / TECI-76

### Der Wunder ~Hakase Taro meets Matsumoto Leiji~

Various Artists

This two-CD release is a collection of music from Leiji Matsumoto's new anime ***Space Symphony Maetel*** (a side story of ***Galaxy Express 999***). Renowned Japanese violinist Taro Hakase worked on the remarkable background music (a total of 38 songs!). The album includes the full-length opening theme "Everlasting Dream," performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the TV-length ending theme "Galaxy Legend," sung by pop idol Takako Uehara.

avex mode / AVCA-22148~9

### ZETTAI

PARADISE GO!! GO!!

"ZETTAI" is the latest release from the idol group PARADISE GO!! GO!!, who often collaborates with popular teen fashion brand PENTY'S. Their youthful energy is captured on this catchy dance number, just as it was in their debut single "Koi no Undokai" (released in August 2004). Once you hear this song, its melody will be permanently stuck in your head! There are six songs on the CD, including instrumentals, and the first pressing comes with a bonus trading card.

avex frax / AVCD-30648

### Olive

Masami Okui

The popular Masami Okui just founded a record label called evolution, and the company's first release is her very own "Olive." This song was used in a commercial for the website Animelomix (www.animelo.tv), which sells anime-themed ringtones and wallpapers for mobile phones. Her positive lyrics and wistful but powerful vocals are as lively as ever. There are six songs on the CD, including "SNOWY" and "Troubadour—Ginyu Shijin."

evolution / EVCS-0001

### KAELA

Kaela Kimura

Some of you might remember Kaela from our October 2004 issue. She started out as a model and then took a role as a host for the TV show ***saku saku***. She finally debuted as a singer last year with "Level 42." This is her first CD—it includes the album remix version of "Level 42," "happiness!!!" (an image song for a lip balm) and lots more! From psychedelic to rock 'n' roll, this has it all in one package! The first pressing comes with a bonus DVD.

Columbia Music Entertainment / COCP-32988

### Final approach—ED Shudaika + Character Songs + Monologue Shu

Various Artists

This is a collection of character songs from the TV anime ***Final Approach***, based on Princess Soft's popular PS2 game. The album contains the ending theme "Love, Fate, Love" (sung by Miyuki Hashimoto), in addition to character songs for Shizuka Masuda (Sakura Nogawa), Akane Mizuhara (Miyu Matsuki), Miki Moriya (Yukari Tamura), Emiho Mutsu (Chiaki Takahashi) and Yurika Menou (Yuko Minaguchi), plus monologues from each character. There are ten songs on the album.

Lantis / LACA-5332

### PLAY GIRL

Rina Aiuchi

Rina Aiuchi's fourth album ***PLAY GIRL*** is packed with all her recent hits, like "START" (the opening theme for the popular TV anime ***Case Closed***), "Dream x Dream" (the theme song for the ***Case Closed*** movie ***Ginyoku no Magician***), "SET UP!" and her latest single "Boom-Boom-Boom." Each of the 13 songs on the album symbolizes a different type of girl. The first pressing comes with a bonus track and a special movie you can download onto a cell phone.

GIZA studio / GZCA-5060

# Rufus Shinra

## FINAL FANTASY 7 BEFORE CRISIS

In Square Enix's ***Final Fantasy VII***, Rufus was the young CEO of the Shinra Corporation, which controlled the government through its monopoly on Mako energy. A cold, logical and selfish man, his trademark white suit with sweeping tails made him look like someone in the mafia or *yakuza*. ***Before Crisis*** (***BC***) is a new cell phone game in Japan that takes place six years before ***FFVII*** and focuses on Shinra's top-secret elite "Administrative Research Branch"—the TURKS. In ***BC***, Rufus lets his hair dangle loosely around his face like a flashy goth-punk singer, instead of slicking it back like he did in ***FFVII***. I loved his character, especially because of the way the black-suited TURKS under his command called him "Mr. President" and snapped to attention like he was a mafia don.

### The costume

Like in ***FFVII***, in ***BC*** Rufus wears a white suit with a white wraparound-skirt thingy (very J-pop-esque). But while making the suit, I realized it wouldn't look very good in real life—that's why I switched to the extra-long white coat. Suits are really hard to make (they always end up hanging strange), so I used a store-bought one and sewed in a black pinstripe lining (visible on the lapels). I added the gold buttons to make it look more expensive—like something the obscenely rich would think looks stylish but is really just gaudy. The coat is also distinctive. It was altered from a store-bought one. I took in the waist as much as possible to make it flare out elegantly below the waist like a skirt, keeping the feel of the original design. I also added fur at the wrists and neck to emphasize Rufus's gangster look. The other reason I used the coat was because it was super cold outside. Surely Rufus, the prince of Shinra, wouldn't risk getting sick wearing a thin suit in weather like this! The coat is a perfect match for him.

# EVERYBODY COSPLAY!

**JAN KUROTAKI**
**Birthday: April**
This is the start of Jan's [illegible] year as a cosplayer, and in that time she's made over 100 costumes based on anime, manga and games. She's been drawing amateur manga (*dojinshi*) since age 11, and at the moment she's working on a computer game based on the popular manga ***NARUTO***. When Jan was four, she moved overseas, and over the next [illegible] years, she attended international schools in the US, Belgium, Thailand and Hong Kong. A true fan of Japanese pop culture, she's currently employed at a video game company and works as a fashion model on the side.

**HELLO, JAN KUROTAKI HERE.** Tokyo is still very cold, so cold that when I was at a hotel recently, I visited their open-air hot springs four times in a single day. But the cold didn't keep cosplayers from running around in skimpy leotards at this year's snowy winter Comiket (the biggest amateur manga convention in Japan). I wasn't in a leotard (I went as Belldandy from ***Oh My Goddess!***), but even so, the cloth was so thin I ended up sick and running a fever the next day. Bleh. I always end up sick after Comiket, and this one was no exception. Admittedly, that doesn't have much to do with this month's column, which is about some costumes I've modified from the official versions. But lately I *have* been doing a lot of costumes designed for cold-weather wear...

## Murasaki
### POP'N MUSIC SERIES

There's no one in Japan who hasn't heard of the music game sensation ***Pop'n Music***, one of the most popular arcade games in the country. The secret to the success of this 12-game series from Konami's Bemani catalog lies in its characters, cute pop-culture icons that otaku just go crazy over. Cosplayers love it because the characters change their outfits as you progress through the game. There's even a little sidestory about them on the Konami website! Those guys really know the way to fans' hearts. Murasaki is based on real-life musician Sheena Ringo, an individualist who inspired the current trend of mixing traditional Japanese elements into punk outfits.

### The costume

This is actually a *juban*, which is normally worn *under* a traditional Japanese kimono. (In other words, it's lingerie.) The outfit is supposed to be just a red juban and a crimson *obi* belt, but that looked too bland, so I wrapped a silver and pearl chain belt twice around my waist and made a ribbon out of Japanese crepe paper for my hair. I added a butterfly hair stick, making the whole thing much more cheery and colorful. Then I added long stick-on nails with 3D butterfly stickers (also my idea). If the fan were open, you'd see that it has a picture of a butterfly flying through the darkness. I use folded paper umbrellas like this one a lot. It's one of those props that I almost always carry when I'm cosplaying in a traditional Japanese outfit. People usually don't recognize this costume unless I'm hanging out with other ***Pop'n*** characters, but those who can identify it are always delighted to see it.

# THE BEST FRIEND A JUVENILE DELINQUENT CAN HAVE...

From the hilarious manga and anime ***Cromartie High School*** comes the student most likely to start a fight... or the student most likely to need an oil change— Mechazawa.

Go ahead and get in touch with your inner delinquent.

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Yukari Fukui was born October 28, 1982, and s mes from Kanagawa, Japan. She's currently playing Nono in ***Top o Nerae 2***! Sara Adiemus in *School Rumble*. Besides voice acting, Yukari also stars in ***Fuku*** [from BM.3] and ***Moeyo! Dragon Girls*** [from ta poration], both of which are available in Japan. She also contributes to *Ne* Japan's ***Top o Nerae 2!*** cover-age with illustrations and comments.

## VOICE ACTRESS SPOTLIGHT

**Yukari gets along well with dogs, just like Nono in *Top o Nerae 2!*—but where did that cat c ne from?!**

# YUKARI FUKUI

shot by YUTAKA TAKAYAMA
styling by KANAKO ONITSUKA
hair & makeup by YAE YOKOTA (fringe)
text by YOKO OOCHI

### I wouldn't be here without everyone's support

"I was sooo impressed by the beautiful animation. The snowy countryside at the beginning of the show reminded me of my grandma's house." The cute and enthusiastic Yukari Fukui is currently playing the heroine Nono in ***Top o Nerae 2!***. (So far, the first two OVA volumes have been released in Japan, and both are selling well.) As a result, for the first time in her career, Yukari was invited to a preview and promotional event last year. "Well...to tell you the truth, I only knew ***Top o Nerae*** from the ***Super Robot Taisen*** games, so I didn't even know the original had been created more than 15 years ago. When I got the role of Nono, I finally had a chance to watch it, and I was like, 'How come I didn't know it was so good?!' It totally blew my mind...honestly."

Yukari is already well-known for her appearances in movies, TV shows and commercials, but her first voice role dates back to 1998 when she played Rika Sena in ***His and Her Circumstances***, directed by Hideaki Anno. She might not have gotten the job if her agency hadn't suggested she go to the audition. "I was a huge fan of ***Neon Genesis Evangelion***, and everyone around me knew about it. One day, I was asked if I wanted to audition [for ***His and Her Circumstances***], and I almost screamed because I was getting to meet Mr. Anno. It was so cool!"

As Yukari tells it, at the audition, she just kept staring at Anno like some wide-eyed groupie.

"I had to tell him how much I loved his work. I was nervous during the audition, but I gave it my all. I also told him that I'm good at this gymnastic move called a handspring, and I could show it to him right then and there. But that idea was turned down flat, because the audition was for voice acting. Duh! [giggle]"

Yukari's charming voice may have won her the role, but she says that the actual recording was very difficult. "The timing threw me off. It was extremely difficult to match my voice to the onscreen action. Sometimes I'd get frustrated, but every day was filled with excitement and new discoveries."

Yukari later played a role in another GAINAX title and kept herself busy with various projects, but then she decided to take a short break for personal reasons. That's when she was called in for the role of Nono. "She's such a klutz, but she's trying her best to become a pilot. They told me that I'm kind of like Nono, and they asked if I'd consider giving the role a try. I was so impressed by the encouraging staff. I feel the pressure, but I was honored to receive a job offer like this. I'll do my best...just like Nono!" Sounds like Yukari's can-do attitude will take her far! Keep your eyes on her!

## I feel the pressure, but I'll do my best... just like Nono!

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# Anime Network Listings - MARCH 2005

ANIME NETWORK ON DEMAND

Anime Network is the first cable channel in North America dedicated to anime. More markets will be added soon—for the latest information on programming and availability, log on to **www.theanimenetwork.com.**

## ADELPHIA

Anime Network is now available on Adelphia's VOD service throughout the greater Los Angeles area and parts of the midwest including Cleveland Heights, OH.

| TITLE | PROGRAM |
|---|---|
| Aquarian Age | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| Azumanga Daioh | Episodes 17 & 18 |
| Battle of the Planets | Episodes 5-7 |
| Chobits | Episodes 25 & 26 |
| Chrono Crusade | Episodes 6 & 7 |
| Colorful | Episodes 5-8 |
| Cyberteam in Akihabara | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Divergence Eve | Episode 1 |
| E'S Otherwise | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Get Backers | Episodes 1-4 |
| Gravitation | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Happy Lesson | Episodes 11 & 12 |
| Megazone 23 Part 1 | OVA |
| Mezzo | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Neon Genesis Evangelion | Episodes 16 & 17 |
| Peacemaker Kurogane | Episodes 1-3 |
| Petite Princess Yucie | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Princess Minerva | OVA |
| Puni Puni Poemy | OVA |
| RahXephon | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Robotech | Episodes 5-7 |
| Saiyuki | Episodes 41 & 42 |
| Sister Princess | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| The Slayers | Episodes 4-6 |
| Steam Detectives | Episode 18 |
| Steel Angel Kurumi 2 | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Wandaba Style | Episodes 1-4 |
| Wedding Peach | Episodes 16-18 |
| Yesterday | Feature |

## CABLEVISION

Anime Network is currently available in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut via Cablevision's iO Video on Demand Service.

| TITLE | PROGRAM |
|---|---|
| 2009 Lost Memories | Feature |
| Bento Beat Box | Music Videos |
| Chobits | Episodes 24-26 |
| Chrono Crusade | Episodes 1-4 |
| Cromartie High School | Episodes 1-4 |
| Cyberteam In Akihabara | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Debutante Detective Corps | OVA |
| Divergence Eve | Episodes 2 & 3 |
| D•N•Angel | Episodes 10 & 11 |
| E'S Otherwise | Episodes 3 & 4 |
| Gantz | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Get Backers | Episodes 5-8 |
| G-Force | Episodes 21-23 |
| Gravion Zwei | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Gravitation | Episode 13 |
| Kaleido Star | Episodes 23-26 |
| Lady Death | Feature |
| Legend of Crystania | Episode 1 |
| MAPS | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Megaman OVA | Episodes 1-3 |
| Mezzo | Episodes 11 & 12 |
| Moeyo Ken OVA | Episodes 2 & 3 |
| Neon Genesis Evangelion Platinum | Episodes 18-20 |
| Peacemaker Kurogane | Episodes 4 & 5 |
| Petite Princess Yucie | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Robotech: Remastered | Episodes 7-9 |
| Saiyuki: Requiem | Feature |
| Sakura Wars 2 OVA | Episodes 3 & 4 |
| Sister Princess | Episodes 11 & 12 |
| Sorcerer Hunter OVA | Episodes 1-3 |
| The Slayers | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| Sorcerer Hunter OVA | Episodes 1-3 |
| Steel Angel Kurumi 2 | Episodes 9-12 |
| A Tree of Palme | Feature |
| Ushio & Tora | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| Wandaba Style | Episodes 5-8 |

## COMCAST/RCN

Anime Network is available on Comcast On Demand. Be sure to check out the website for the most up-to-date information.

Anime Network is available to RCN/STARPOWER's Impulse on Demand℠ subscribers in Manhattan, NY; Central NJ; Bay Area, Carmel, Lehigh Valley, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Francisco, CA; Washington D.C.; Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Baltimore, MD; Richmond, VA; Albuquerque; NM; Charleston, NC; Atlanta, Augusta and Savannah, GA; Mobile, AL; Huntsville, AL; Indianapolis, IN; Seattle, WA; Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, PA.

| TITLE | PROGRAM |
|---|---|
| Aquarian Age | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| Azumanga Daioh | Episodes 17 & 18 |
| Battle of the Planets | Episodes 5-7 |
| Chobits | Episodes 25 & 26 |
| Chrono Crusade | Episodes 6 & 7 |
| Colorful | Episodes 5-8 |
| Cyberteam in Akihabara | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Divergence Eve | Episode 1 |
| E'S Otherwise | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Get Backers | Episodes 1-4 |
| Gravitation | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Happy Lesson | Episodes 11 & 12 |
| Megazone 23 Part 1 | OVA |
| Mezzo | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Neon Genesis Evangelion | Episodes 16 & 17 |
| Peacemaker Kurogane | Episodes 1-3 |
| Petite Princess Yucie | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Princess Minerva | OVA |
| Puni Puni Poemy | OVA |
| RahXephon | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Robotech | Episodes 5-7 |
| Saiyuki | Episodes 41 & 42 |
| Sister Princess | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| The Slayers | Episodes 4-6 |
| Steam Detectives | Episode 18 |
| Steel Angel Kurumi 2 | Episodes 1-2 |
| Wandaba Style | Episodes 1-4 |
| Wedding Peach | Episodes 16-18 |
| Yesterday | Feature |

## ROGERS

Anime Network is now available on ROGERS CABLE in Toronto, Canada.

| TITLE | PROGRAM |
|---|---|
| 2009 Lost Memories | Feature |
| Battle of the Planets | Episodes 3 & 4 |
| Chobits | Episodes 13-15 |
| Comic Party | Episodes 5 & 6 |
| DaiGuard | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Debutante Detective Corps | OVA |
| Excel Saga | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Final Fantasy: Unlimited | Episodes 13-15 |
| Full Metal Panic! | Episodes 13-15 |
| Gravitation | Episodes 3 & 4 |
| Magical Shopping Arcade Abenobashi | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Megazone 23 Part 2 | OVA |
| Najica Blitz Tactics | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Neon Genesis Evangelion | Episodes 9 &10 |
| Noir | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Pretear | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Saiyuki: Requiem | Feature |
| Sister Princess | Episodes 1& 2 |
| Wandaba Style | Episodes 1 & 2 |

## SHAW

Anime Network recently extended its reach into western Canada (which includes Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Saskatchewan, Edmonton) through Shaw Digital Cable.

| TITLE | PROGRAM |
|---|---|
| Aquarian Age | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| Azumanga Daioh | Episodes 17 & 18 |
| Battle of the Planets | Episodes 5-7 |
| Chobits | Episodes 25 & 26 |
| Chrono Crusade | Episodes 6 & 7 |
| Colorful | Episodes 5-8 |
| Cyberteam in Akihabara | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Divergence Eve | Episode 1 |
| E'S Otherwise | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Get Backers | Episodes 1-4 |
| Gravitation | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Happy Lesson | Episodes 11 & 12 |
| Megazone 23 Part 1 | OVA |
| Mezzo | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Neon Genesis Evangelion | Episodes 16 & 17 |
| Peacemaker Kurogane | Episodes 1-3 |
| Petite Princess Yucie | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Princess Minerva | OVA |
| Puni Puni Poemy | OVA |
| RahXephon | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| Robotech | Episodes 5-7 |
| Saiyuki | Episodes 41 & 42 |
| Sister Princess | Episodes 7 & 8 |
| The Slayers | Episodes 4-6 |
| Steam Detectives | Episode 18 |
| Steel Angel Kurumi 2 | Episodes 1 & 2 |
| Wandaba Style | Episodes 1-4 |
| Wedding Peach | Episodes 16-18 |
| Yesterday | Feature |

## TIME WARNER

Anime Network is available in select Time Warner markets coast to coast. If you have Time Warner digital cable and live in the following areas, then you have Anime Network: Shreveport, LA; Corpus Christi, TX; Memphis, TN; San Antonio, TX; Nederland, TX; NE Syracuse, NY; C Syracuse,NY; El Paso, TX; Kimberly, WI; Lincoln, NE; Cincinnati,OH; Laredo, TX; LaFeria, TX; Rochester, NY; Portland, ME; Houma, LA; Liberty, NY; St. Augustine, FL; Houston, TX; Cape Coral, FL; Albany, NY; San Diego,CA; Desert Cities, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Wichita Falls, TX; Charlotte, NC; Milwaukee, WI; Tampa, FL; Clarksburg, WV; Waco, TX; Austin, TX; Western Ohio; Kansas City, KS; Columbus, OH; Philadelphia, PA

| TITLE | PROGRAM |
|---|---|
| Angelic Layer | Episodes 17 & 18 |
| Azumanga Daioh | Episodes 5 & 6 |
| Bento Beat Box | Music Videos |
| Chobits | Episodes 19 & 20 |
| Cromartie High School | Episode 1 |
| Final Fantasy: Unlimited | Episodes 17 & 18 |
| Full Metal Panic! | Episodes 3 & 4 |
| Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water | Episodes 3 & 4 |
| Peacemaker Kurogane | Episodes 1-4 |
| Petite Princess Yucie | Episodes 5 & 6 |
| Pretear | Episode 13 |
| Robotech | Episodes 9 & 10 |
| The Slayers | Episodes 3-7 |
| Steam Detectives | Episode 19 |

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# TV Listings - MARCH 2005

### ABC Family
*Power Rangers Dino Thunder*, *Digimon* and *Medabots* continue this March on ABC Family's Saturday mornings.

### Action Channel
Every Friday at midnight, catch a different episode of the *Macross Plus* OVA.

### Anime Network
Anime Network is the only network that delivers anime 24 hours a day! This month's hot lineup includes *Saiyuki: Requiem*, *Cromartie High School* (see spotlight), *Peacemaker Kurogane*, *Petite Princess Yucie*, *Chrono Crusade*, *Mezzo*, *A Tree of Palme*, *Battle of the Planets*, *E's Otherwise* and so much more. If you don't have Anime Network in your area, pick up the phone and request it from your local cable company today!

### Cartoon Network
*Fullmetal Alchemist*, *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*, *The Super Milk-Chan Show*, *Gundam SEED* and *InuYasha* (see spotlight) should be more than enough reason for you to tune in and show some love for Cartoon Network this month.

### FoxBox
*Shaman King*, *One Piece*, *F-Zero GP Legend*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Sonic X*, *Cramp Twins* and *Winx* deliver the good times on Fox's Saturday mornings.

### G4techTV
*Gungrave*, *Geneshaft* and *Last Exile* continue to run on a rotating basis in March.

### International Channel
*Record of Lodoss War*, *Black Jack*, *Patlabor* and *Now and Then, Here and There* will keep old-school fans entertained.

### The WB
WB's Saturday morning offerings include *Pokémon*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, *Teen Titans*, *Xiaolin Showdown*, *¡Mucha Lucha!* and *The Batman*.

## TV SPOTLIGHTS

©EIJI NONAKA • KODANSHA, TV TOKYO, EPTA

### Cromartie High School
**(Anime Network)**
There's only one place to see *Cromartie High School* on TV, and that's Anime Network. Hailed as Japan's number one comedy, *Cromartie's* offbeat humor and raucous cast of delinquent teens are sure to delight viewers of every variety. Ever wonder what would happen if a gorilla, a tough-talking robot and a Freddie Mercury look-alike went to high school together? *Cromartie High* has the anwer. How would you feel if the thug who sat next to you in algebra class wore a Mexican wrestling mask to school every day? *Cromartie* will take you there. Get set for the strangest laugh-out-loud anime you've ever seen, courtesy of AN!

© Rumiko Takahashi/Shogakukan • Kontori TV • Sunrise 2000

### InuYasha
**(Cartoon Network)**
Follow the ongoing exploits of everyone's favorite dog-like demon, InuYasha. From the powerful imagination of creator Rumiko Takahashi, *InuYasha* packs romantic tension, Japanese mythology and a generous dose of only-in-anime action into each pulse-pounding episode. Will InuYasha and shrine maiden Kagome ever unearth the sacred Jewel of Four Souls? Find out in this fan-favorite TV series, only airing on Cartoon Network.

## Uta∩Kata

» www.uta-kata.com
Chiba TV
Creators: gímik & HAL
Director: Keiji Gotoh

### STORY

Ichika was just a normal high school girl until the end of spring semester when she met a mysterious girl named Manatsu, who emerged from a big mirror at school. Manatsu says she's there to observe the human world as part of a project she's working on over summer vacation, and she imbues Ichika with magical powers. Ichika spends the summer with her new friend, introducing her to others as a pen pal she met over the Net. A set of twins named Sei and Kai join them, and as time passes, Ichika experiences all sorts of new things and learns about the world through her new powers. But she also feels the pain of the realization that there are things she can't do anything about. As Saya, who lives next door to Ichika, makes memory after memory, the hands of fate are turning just beyond her sight. Saya seems to think of Ichika as some sort of test subject, and the summer as some sort of test. Even Manatsu, who seems to be just enjoying herself, appears to feel guilty about something having to do with Ichika...

### EPISODE 11

With one week of summer vacation left, Satsuki invites Ichika and her friends to go swimming. Ichika seems distracted, and Michiru, who realizes something's wrong, offers to listen to her problems. But Ichika can't talk about Manatsu or her magic, so what can she tell her?

### FINAL EPISODE

Ichika goes to Saya's house, which was up for sale until the day before summer vacation ended. Saya, Sei and Kai are waiting for Ichika inside. Sei is silent, and Kai obeys Saya's every order. Ichika has seen the world through the eyes of gods, and now Saya forces her to make a terrible choice.

## W ~Wish~

» www.trinet-ent.com/princess_hour
TV Kanagawa
Creator: PrincessSoft
Director: Osamu Sekita

### STORY

High-schooler Junna Tohno was in a bad accident a long time ago, and he doesn't have any memory of the years before the accident. Still, he lives a happy, quiet life with his twin sister Senna. One day, he reunites with a childhood friend named Haruhi Inohara, and those peaceful days disappear forever. Between Haruhi and Senna, his life becomes filled with all sorts of romantic goings-on, but it's not all fun and games. Junna discovers that he loses consciousness every time he tries to remember something from before the accident. But when he realizes something about his past, a mysterious fog rolls in and surrounds the entire city...

### EPISODE 11

Junna works through his old memories and sees his parents smiling and his little sister waving at him. He then finds himself in the middle of an amaryllis field near a river. A "relic" is in the field, and it seems to have some sort of connection to Junna's lost memories. There's also a secret about Senna that Junna doesn't know about.

### EPISODE 12

In a flash, Junna sees all his precious memories of life with his sister—swimming in the ocean, going to summer festivals, and just enjoying life together. But the cruel fog that fills the town drags him back to reality. As the illusion fades, he picks up an object that was in a warehouse.

### FINAL EPISODE

Junna and the others were just trying to hold on to the important things that make up their world. Having finally remembered everything, Junna recalls something his parents once told him and dashes through the fog-filled streets in search of something very important...

## Yakitate!! Japan

» www.yakitate-japan.com
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/yakitate-japan
TV Tokyo
Creator: Takashi Hashiguchi
Director: Yasunao Aoki

### EPISODE 9

Kazuma tackles his first rookie challenge—making sandwich bread that won't mold, even after three weeks. He thinks he can do it by adding wasabi (Japanese horseradish) to the dough, because wasabi is highly antibacterial. In the meantime, Kawachi works out very hard to increase his body temperature in order to have warmer hands for kneading bread.

### EPISODE 10

Kawachi is so engrossed in training that he all but ignores Kazuma, and Kazuma mistakenly believes that Kawachi is no longer his friend. But Matsudai tells Kazuma that Kawachi's cold attitude must be because he now regards Kazuma as a true rival.

### EPISODE 11

Kazuma and Kawachi pass the qualifying round and advance to the second stage, where they have to make butter rolls. Finding the right kind of butter is crucial, and Kawachi manages to select a very good one. But Kazuma's choice disappoints Kuroyanagi, one of the judges.

### EPISODE 12

Kazuma's decision to use margarine instead of butter causes Kuroyanagi to disqualify him without even tasting his bread, but Suwahara notices that Kazuma is using an ingenious strategy to cover for his mistake.

## Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters GX

» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/yuugiou
TV Tokyo
Director: Hatsuki Tsuji

### EPISODE 11

Judai and Sho are having a tough time in the dark duel because of the Paradox Brothers' Gate Guardian. If they lose, they'll have to leave school! Sho gets discouraged when his attacks backfire, but with Judai's support, he regains his confidence and destroys the Gate Guardian. Unfortunately, the Paradox Brothers have an even more powerful card up their sleeves.

### EPISODE 12

Manjome's position in the Obelisk Blue dorm has been shaky ever since he lost to Judai, so he duels Misawa of the Ra Yellow dorm, the best duelist of all the new students. Manjome uses a fire-based deck, but Misawa uses small Hydrogen and Oxygen Dragons to summon a Water Dragon.

### EPISODE 13

While looking for the missing Manjome, Judai runs across a monkey named SAL who has been altered to play duels. SAL wants to escape and has taken some girls hostage. Judai tries to save the girls by challenging SAL to a duel.

### EPISODE 14

Most of the students have gone home, but Takadera remains on the deserted campus. A student of the occult, Takadera tries to summon the ghost of the Psycho Shocker. A ghost-like creature appears, but it wants Takadera as a sacrifice and begins to hunt him. Judai ends up dueling it, but is he good enough to defeat a ghost?

## Pocket Monster Advanced Generation ("Pokémon")

» www.pokemon.co.jp
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/pokemon_ag
TV Tokyo
Creator: Satoshi Tajiri
General Director: Kunihiko Yuyama
Director: Masamitsu Hidaka

### EPISODE 107

Satoshi and his friends stop by a village where the villagers are very annoyed by a mischievous pokémon named Absol. Absol doesn't usually appear, but these days, he's been popping up quite a lot. On top of that, they hear that a kid named Satoru hasn't returned since he went to hunt for Absol. So Satoshi and the others head out with Satoru's little brother Noboru to look for him.

### EPISODE 108

The group is on top of a mountain. Satoshi's badge case is taken away by a pokémon named Yukiwarashi, and Satoshi chases the naughty pokémon into a snowstorm. But Satoshi slips and tumbles all the way to the bottom. Pikachu tries to save him, but he and Yukiwarashi are captured by Team Rocket!

### EPISODE 109

As Satoshi and the others rest in the forest, Masato finds a pokémon named Laltos, who has developed a high fever after falling into a river. The group hurries to the pokémon center, but on the way there, some mysterious trainers appear and challenge them to a battle. Satoshi tells Masato to take Laltos to the center while he battles the trainers.

## PRECURE

» www.toei-anim.co.jp/tv/precure
» www.asahi.co.jp/precure
ABC / TV Asahi
Creator: Izumi Todo
Director: Daisuke Nishio

### EPISODE 43

Nagisa's classmate Yui is acting strange, so Nagisa decides to see if she can help. Nagisa gets confused after learning that Yui has a crush on Fujimura, the same guy she herself likes, but Nagisa somehow ends up promising to help Yui anyway.

### EPISODE 44

The student council throws a Christmas party at school, and Rina and Shiho are hyped up at the thought of dancing with the guys they like. But Nagisa hesitates to ask Fujimura to dance with her because of the situation with Yui.

### EPISODE 45

Nagisa's class wins the school singing contest, and next up is the national competition. But for some reason, Chiaki doesn't seem very happy about it.

### EPISODE 46

Three dark warriors attack Nagisa and Honoka. The girls transform into Cure Black and Cure White to fight back, but one of the dark warriors drains the power from the Prism Stones and makes its power his own.

## Rozen Maiden

» p-pit.ktplan.ne.jp/rozen
» www.tbs.co.jp/rozen-maiden
TBS
Creator: PEACH-PIT
Director: Mamoru Matsuo

### STORY

Until now, even though Suiginto was hostile toward Shinku, she stood by her. But Suiginto finally challenges Shinku as part of the Alice Game. Shinku accepts Suiginto's challenge, but she doesn't tell anyone about it, maybe because she doesn't want to bother Jun and the others, or maybe because she doesn't want anyone to interrupt the battle. Shinku walks to the site of the upcoming battle...

### EPISODE 11

Shinku is heading into battle against Suiginto, but Suiginto shuts off Shinku's power source by making her medium Jun go to sleep. Suiginto seems to have the upper hand. If Shinku loses in the Alice Game, not only can she not become Alice, but she'll also get turned into a regular doll that can't move! Even though Shinku is at a disadvantage, she begins the battle. In the meantime, Jun is wandering around in the nightmare Suiginto created. The nightmare was made from bitter memories of his past, and all he can do is just keep running away from the horror. The light from his ring, which is proof of his contract with Shinku, is becoming weaker. That means Shinku's power is running out...

### FINAL EPISODE

The battle between Shinku and Suiginto is more explosive than ever. But Shinku's power is very limited after losing Jun. Shinku's friends try to beat back Suiginto, but Suiginto's powerful attack is unstoppable. Shinku gets into a bind, but just then, someone unexpected appears. Shinku is able to rise up again, and the battle begins anew!

## Samurai Gun

» avexmode.jp/animation/samurai
» www.tv-asahi.co.jp/samuraigun
TV Asahi
Creator: Kazuhiro Kumagai
Director: Kazuhito Kikuchi

### STORY

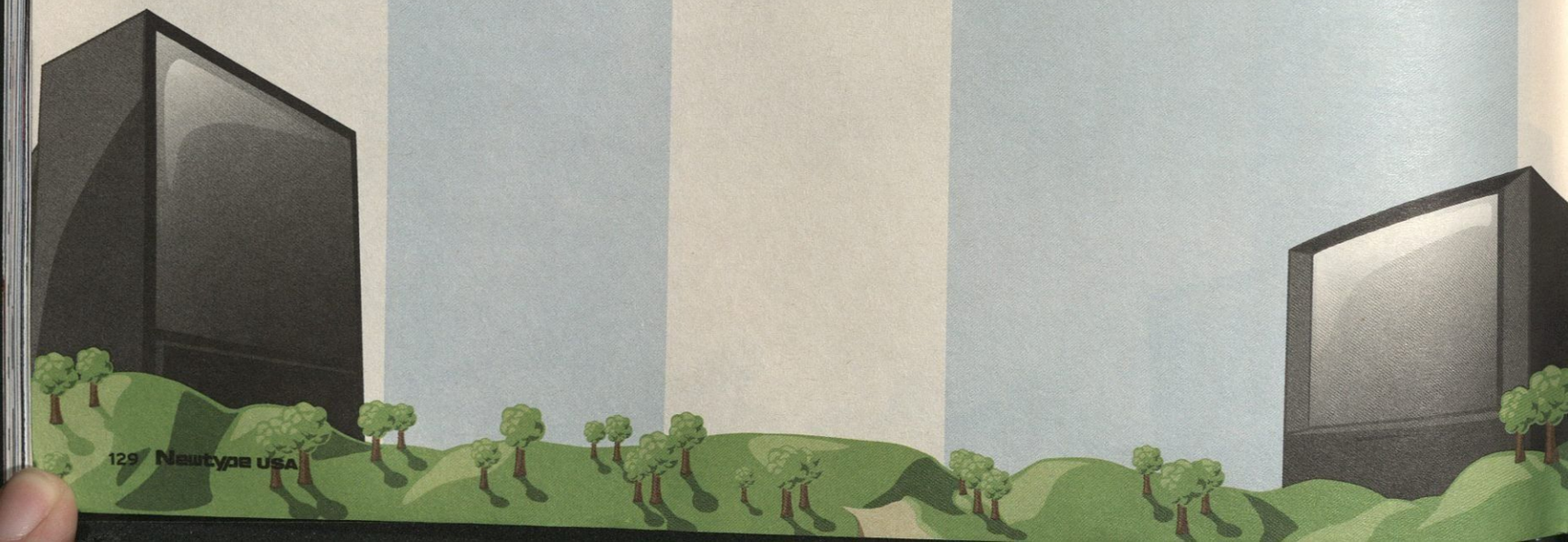
The Samurai Guns are a mysterious band of ruthless arbiters of justice who cut down evil wherever they find it, whether the perpetrators are powerful warriors or government officials. The people think of them as Robin Hood figures, but in actuality they're the paramilitary arm of an underground anti-government organization known as the Council. One of the Samurai Guns is a man named Ichimatsu, whose older sister was killed before his very eyes when he was a young boy. He hates killing and hesitates to slay even those who seem evil, but the Council cares little for his personal sense of ethics. When the Council orders Ichimatsu to kill, they expect him to kill. Ichimatsu struggles to reconcile his aversion to killing with the demands of his duty until the day he learns the name of the man who killed his sister. His name is Rekkai, and he's a government official. Knowing that facing Rekkai will be his reward for carrying out his duty, Ichimatsu strengthens his resolve to fight...

### EPISODE 11

Ichimatsu is dispatched to a village that has been all but devastated by a bitter struggle for the village leader's seat. His mission is to retrieve repair plans for a new type of weapon used by the Samurai Guns, and since the plans are in the hands of the leader, Ichimatsu has no choice but to involve himself in the ugly power struggle. He locates the village leader without much trouble, and just as things are starting to look up for the mission, a mysterious ninja priest armed with a machine gun appears. He divulges a wealth of information about the Samurai Guns, throwing Ichimatsu into a state of confusion.

### FINAL EPISODE

An ordinary person is usually no match for a Samurai Gun, but several Samurai Guns are suddenly assassinated. The perpetrator turns out to be a former Samurai Gun—a man named Gota who was trained at the same school as Ichimatsu. Why has Gota betrayed the Samurai Guns and begun killing his former comrades? Looking for answers, Ichimatsu heads out to find Gota.



## School Rumble

» www.school-rumble.net
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/school-rumble
TV Tokyo
Creator: Jin Kobayashi
Director: Shinji Takamatsu

### EPISODE 11

Tenma, Eri, Mikoto and Akira head to the pool. After swimming alone for a while, Tenma decides to head back to the other three. As she approaches, she sees that three guys are hitting on them. Tenma can't seem to find a good time to work her way into the conversation, so she ends up going back into the pool again.

### EPISODE 12

Tenma and Harima go to the ocean along with three other boys and three other girls. Harima tries to get close to Tenma by driving his rival Nara away. Meanwhile, Mikoto and Imadori get stranded on a small island.

### EPISODE 13

While Tenma and her friends are staying at an inn, Tenma mistakenly comes to believe that Harima loves Mikoto. Resilient as ever, she kindly offers to be his partner and play Mikoto so he can practice confessing his love over and over again. (Such a selfless act on her part...)

### EPISODE 14

During summer break, Tenma and Eri are working on some homework their teachers assigned for them to work on during the vacation. When Tenma tells Eri that she wants to help Harima and Mikoto develop their relationship, Eri blurts out something bad about Mikoto—just as Mikoto steps into the room.

## SD Gundam Force

» www.sunrise-inc.co.jp/sd_gundamforce
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/gundamforce
» www.sdgundamforce.com
TV Tokyo
Creators: Hajime Yatate & Yoshiyuki Tomino
Directors: Yuichi Abe & Nobuhiro Kondo

### EPISODE 50

General Zeong, the leader of Dark Axis, is back in business, and that's bad news for Ark, not to mention Lacroa and Neotopia. The Gundam Force decides they have to take out the General in order to save the world, but the General doesn't even bat an eyelash at their attacks. Then the General realizes that Shute is the source of Captain Gundam's power, so he traps Shute inside his own body.

### EPISODE 51

Captain, Zero and Bakunetsumaru are fighting to get him back, but Shute is still trapped inside a terrible illusion where the robots and humans of Neotopia are at war. Shute believes that his friends will save him and does his best to hang on, but he soon finds himself facing his own double.

### FINAL EPISODE

Captain Gundam and the others have successfully defended the universe from Dark Axis, and the long war is finally over. It's time for everyone in the Gundam Force to go their separate ways. After a tearful farewell with Bakunetsumaru and Genkimaru, Shute and the others return to Lacroa with the white BaguBagu, which has the power to restore everything that was turned to stone. Lacroa returns to the beautiful world it was before. The Gundam Force is showered with praise from the happy public, and in a beautiful garden full of roses, Shute says his final good-byes to Princess Lily.

## Sergeant KERORO

» www.keroro.com
» www.sunrise-inc.co.jp/keroro
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/keroro
TV Tokyo
Creator: Mine Yoshizaki
General Director: Junichi Sato
Director: Yusuke Yamamoto

### EPISODES 37-38

Keroro orders Dororo to open a ninja school so they can earn some money. But 556, who owns a space detective school, barges into their school and challenges them to a contest to determine whose school is better! On another day, Keroro has the great idea to make a theme park where people can play with dinosaurs. But it turns out that his idea isn't so great after all. A dinosaur goes out of control and attacks Keroro!

### EPISODE 39

Keroro hears that only good kids can receive gifts from Santa Claus. He wants a gift so badly that he decides to become a good boy and work very hard. A few days later, Keroro takes the initiative and starts the big annual housecleaning!

### EPISODE 40

After eating mysterious soup made by Keroro, More starts acting drunk.

## tactics

» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/tactics
TV Tokyo
Creators: Sakura Kinoshita & Kazuko Higashiyama
Director: Hiroshi Watanabe

### EPISODE 11

Kantaro and Haruka are investigating a series of unnatural deaths. All signs point to the killer being some kind of monster. Kantaro and Haruka visit a lakeside village in search of clues, and end up staying with the Suzakuins, the family in charge of ritual ceremonies in the village. Their twin girls Miyabi and Mai attempt to seduce Haruka and Kantaro, but Kantaro knows there's something fishy going on and refuses to play along. He thinks the Suzakuins have something to do with the mysterious deaths. Haruka refuses the offer for his own reasons. It's only a few days before the village festival, where Miyabi will be performing a special ceremony...

### EPISODE 12

Trading company owner Hiroko Sakurazawa asks Kantaro and Haruka to exorcise demons from her house. Accompanied by Yoko, they visit the mansion and begin the exorcism, but the incessant demon attacks prevent them from finishing their work. Kantaro figures they'd better find the cause of all the demon activities first, or it'll be an endless battle. He begins investigating and then notices that Hiroko seems unusually interested in Haruka.

### EPISODE 13

Kantaro and Haruka can't get their minds off the man in military uniform and the demon who threw them for a loop (both suddenly disappeared). One day, the military asks them to look into a series of mysterious disappearances in a forest. Rumor has it that a hideous goblin—that eats ogres!—is responsible. Kantaro and Haruka immediately head for the forest, but a man named Watanabe shows up with an investigative team of his own.

## Tsukuyomi: Moon Phase

» www.jvcmusic.co.jp/m-serve/tsukuyomi
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/tsukuyomi
TV Tokyo
Creator: Keitaro Arima
Director: Akiyuki Shinbo

### EPISODE 11

The twin priestesses Hikari and Kaoru were supposed to go home to Kyoto, but they were so worried about Kohei and Hazuki that they decided to come back. They visit Kohei, who's sick in bed, but then they learn that Hazuki is a vampire and begin acting hostile toward her. Hazuki is irritated because they're being too friendly with her beloved Kohei. Are we in for a catfight?

### EPISODE 12

Kohei's sick grandfather Ryuhei has been mysteriously abducted from the hospital, and Kohei and the others don't know what to do. Then they're visited by one of Kinkel's minions. Kohei learns that if he wants to save his grandfather's life, he must go to Kinkel's mansion. When Kohei and his friends arrive, Hiromi, who's apparently working for Kinkel now, greets them!

### EPISODE 13

Kohei and the others are forced into a tough fight against the incredibly powerful Kinkel. But with the help of Elfriede, they somehow manage to rescue Ryuhei and successfully drive Kinkel away. However, they know they still need to take out Kinkel, or else they won't be able to get out of the mansion, so they decide to set some traps. Meanwhile, Kinkel spies on Kohei and Hazuki and notices that they have more than a master-servant relationship.

## Meitantei Conan ("Case Closed")

» www.tms-e.com
» www.ytv.co.jp/conan/index_set.html
Yomiuri TV / Nippon TV
Creator: Gosho Aoyama
Director: Yasuichiro Yamamoto

### STORY

Heiji and Kazuha visit Conan. They want to take him sightseeing in Osaka, but they can't agree on where to take him, so they decide to have a mystery-solving contest to determine who gets to set their itinerary!

### EPISODE 382

There's something strange about the mystery-solving contest between Heiji and Kazuha—Heiji seems to be giving Kazuha clues! It's obvious he could win if he wanted to, so he must be letting Kazuha win because she's trying so hard.

### EPISODE 383

Conan and the others go to Koshien Stadium to watch the final game of the high school baseball tournament. They enjoy the game until something very strange and disturbing happens. A man calling himself "the monster of Koshien Stadium" confronts them. He tells them he will make three phone calls to cell phones placed somewhere inside the stadium. Conan and the others must find the phones in order to get clues to the guy's whereabouts. If they fail to find him before the game ends, he says he'll kill himself and one other person!

## Mermaid Melody Pichi Pichi Pitchi Pure

» www.tv-aichi.co.jp/pichi
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/pitch
TV Aichi / TV Tokyo
Creators: Michiko Yokote & Pink Hanamori
Director: Yoshitaka Fujimoto

### EPISODE 37

Kaito doesn't want to fight Mikeru because he's afraid of hurting Mikaru, who happens to be inside the same body. But Lucia has made up her mind to confront Mikeru. After all, she's a Mermaid Princess, and it's her duty to save the world. She tells Kaito good-bye and sets off for battle. Hanon and Rina say good-bye to the people they love and get ready for battle, too. Meanwhile, Mikeru feels invincible after acquiring a complete body. But Mikeru doesn't know a dangerous secret about the new body.

### EPISODE 38

Seira urges Lucia and the others to try to save Mikeru using their songs, so the Mermaid Princesses sing the songs of salvation. Kaito and Rihito arrive and start talking to Mikeru, hoping their words will reach Mikaru, who's still inside Mikeru. But can they save *both* of them?!

### EPISODE 39

After all the battles are over, the seven Mermaid Princesses spend some time relaxing. Lucia and the others come up with the idea of throwing a live concert to celebrate having peace in the world again and to thank everyone who helped them. On the day of the party, Lucia, Hanon and Rina give their best performance ever, but then they suddenly realize that they're standing on a different stage...and it's huge!

## Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY

» www.gundam-seed-d.net
MBS / TBS
Creators: Hajime Yatate & Yoshiyuki Tomino
Director: Mitsuo Fukuda

### EPISODE 9

Athrun visits a PLANT in the hopes of preventing the tension between Naturals and Coordinators from escalating, but he learns that negotiations between the two sides have already failed. The Atlantic Federation declares war against the PLANTs and launches an assault using weapons that have been prohibited by law.

### EPISODE 10

People in the PLANTs call for retaliation against Naturals, but they calm down after Lacus Clyne broadcasts a message of peace over public TV. Athrun is shocked because he didn't expect her to be on a PLANT.

### EPISODE 11

The PLANTs put their so-called "active self-defense" policy into action and begin a retaliatory attack on Earth. Meanwhile, Cagalli is being pushed to let Orb join the Atlantic Federation.

### EPISODE 12

As soon as the *Minerva* departs from the Orb docks, it comes under attack from an Earth fleet using a new mobile armor.

### EPISODE 13

In an attempt to kill Lacus, a group of Coordinators attacks the house she's living in.

## Monkey Turn V

» www.vap.co.jp/monkey
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/monkeyturn
TV Tokyo
Creator: Katsutoshi Kawai
Director: Katsuhito Akiyama

### STORY

Having become the national champion, Kenji now wins title after title. But one day he gets severely injured when he's hit by another boat during a race. His chances of racing again are almost nil, and he falls into despair. But thanks to the caring support of friends, Kenji makes a comeback. Despite his long absence and only partially healed injuries, Kenji returns to the winner's circle and eventually develops a special new turning technique. As a result, Kenji is in the running to be the top money-maker in the racing world. This next competition will decide it, but Kenji doesn't perform up to his usual standards and finishes in a disappointing fifth place after the second day of the competition. Meanwhile, Kenji's rival Yuta is racking up points like crazy!

### EPISODE 24

By the third day, Kenji is ten points behind the top racer, and he seems to have no hope of winning. Moreover, the weather suddenly changes, and snow begins to fall. The low temperatures aggravate Kenji's injuries, and he's in no shape to perform well. Yuta, on the other hand, has already acquired many points and is in top condition. But the pressure gets to him, and he makes a mistake at the start of a race.

### FINAL EPISODE

Kenji advances to the final race. He's usually tense before races, but he decides to just relax and enjoy this one. The other racers try to ease the pressure in their own ways. But this race will determine the best racer of the year, and you could cut the tension with a knife.

## MONSTER

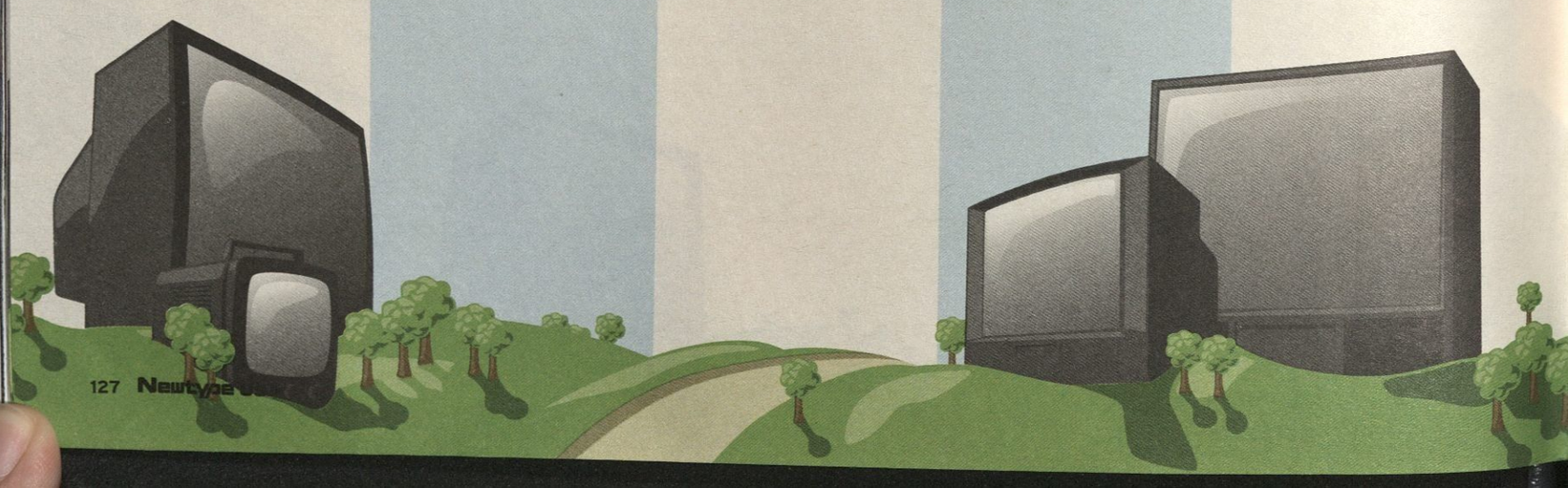
» www.vap.co.jp/monster
» www.bigoriginal.shogakukan.co.jp/monster
Nippon TV
Creator: Naoki Urasawa
Director: Masayuki Kojima

### EPISODE 36

Schubert is going to attend a ceremony at the school library. Tenma hides on top of a bookshelf with gun in hand and waits for his chance to take Johan out. He waits patiently for the ceremony to start, remembering the games of hide-and-seek he used to play as a kid. Meanwhile, Leichwein visits Schubert with documents concerning Johan. He shows Schubert all the bad things Johan did while trying to suck up to him, but Schubert refuses to listen. The ceremony begins...

### EPISODE 37

As Nina reads the story "The Nameless Monster" to Lotte, she realizes she's heard it before, but she can't remember where. Then she hears that a young man who looks just like her passed out while reading the same story. She hurries to the school library and finds that there's a ceremony going on. Inside the library, Tenma aims his gun at Johan but hesitates to pull the trigger. The faces of the people Johan killed flash through his mind. He knows he can put an end to everything.



## MY-HiME

» www.sunrise-inc.co.jp/my-hime
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/maihime
TV Tokyo
Creator: Hajime Yatate
Director: Masakazu Ohara

### EPISODE 12

The vampire incident hasn't been solved, and now Mai's friend Aoi has been attacked! Unable to control her anger, Mai urges the administrative director Mashiro Kazahana to gather information about the attack. Around the same time, Natsuki, who's been investigating the mysterious financial group Searrs, sneaks into an underground church.

### EPISODE 13

The second semester has begun. Since the vampire incident, Mai and Yuichi have kept their distance from each other. Elsewhere, as Midori is in the land of Fuka investigating the power of HiME and the traditional holy ceremony of Ikusa-hime, she develops an interest in the upcoming Tamayura festival. It's said that the festival involves matchmaking. Reito recently confessed his love to Mai, and he's going to ask her to go to the festival with him! Yuichi and Shiho will be there as well.

### EPISODE 14

Because of the Child that Alyssa of Searrs controls, the bridge connecting the mainland and the island was destroyed. The next day, that's all anyone at Fuka Academy can talk about. But somehow there are no media reports about it. No one can even connect to the Internet. Students don't know what to think since they can't get reliable information—or *any* information beyond the rumors. All of a sudden, combat tanks invade Fuka Academy! Students just stare at them out of curiosity, but the situation takes an unexpected turn for the worse. The tanks belong to Searrs, and the school is soon under Searrs control. Alyssa, the leader of the group, wants to obtain the power of HiME. Mai is now captive and helpless!

## NARUTO

» www.naruto.com
» pierrot.jp/title/naruto
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/naruto
TV Tokyo
Creator: Masashi Kishimoto
Director: Hayato Date

### EPISODE 114

Shikamaru believed Choji was strong enough to defeat Jirobo, and the grateful Choji is determined to prove him right. He increases his chakra by eating the secret Curry medicine and then uses a ninja trick to enlarge his body. But Jirobo changes as well, and in his new state, he can easily pick up the huge Choji. It's not looking good for Choji, but he's determined to help Shikamaru and stop Jirobo, even if it costs him his life. He eats his last secret medicine—the Tongarashi.

### EPISODE 115

Shikamaru and the others catch up to the Hidden Sound Ninjas they're chasing, and Shikamaru transforms into Jirobo in an attempt to sneak in and take Sasuke back. But the Hidden Sound Ninja Kidomaru sees through the trick and captures them in a web. Neji manages to cut the threads so everyone can escape, but he stays behind to fight Kidomaru while the others continue chasing after Sasuke.

### EPISODES 116 & 117

Neji attacks Kidomaru with one of his best attacks. He figures Kidomaru's done for, but the other man uses his spider-like abilities to cover his body in a hard substance, and the attack doesn't work. Moreover, the attack convinces Kidomaru that Neji is dangerous, and now he'll only attack from afar—so far away that Neji can't use his Byakugan against him.

## ONE PIECE

» www.toei-anim.co.jp/tv/onep
» www.fujitv.co.jp/b_hp/onepiece
Fuji TV
Creator: Eiichiro Oda
Series Director: Konosuke Uda

### EPISODE 213

The competition between the Straw Hat Pirates and Foxy Pirates continues. The third round is a series of five roller-skate races. The rules are simple—one racer from each team competes, while the others do anything they can to block their opponent's progress. Luffy is chosen to race in the first and fifth races, but as it turns out, he's no good at roller-skating.

### EPISODE 214

The Straw Hat Pirates can't lose anymore, as they're already two points behind the Foxy Pirates. To add insult to injury, Luffy and his friends end up giving their opponents a lead in the third round.

### EPISODE 215

Luffy and the Foxy Pirates agree to extend the competition by three more rounds, and the first match is dodgeball!

## Otogi Zoushi

» d-arkweb.com/sho-u/otogizoushi
» www.production-ig.co.jp/anime/otogizoushi
Nippon TV
Creators: Production I.G & Nippon TV
Director: Mizuho Nishikubo

### STORY

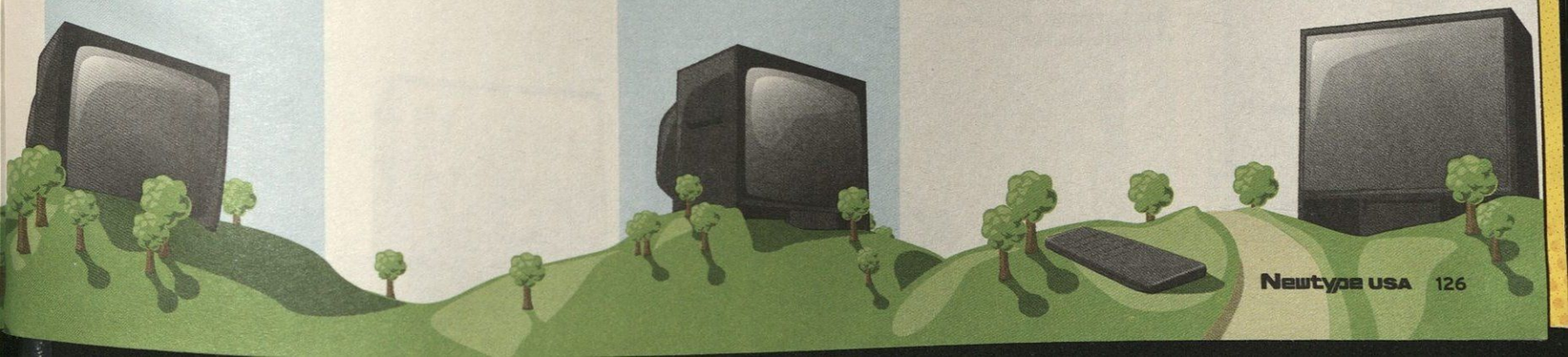
Hikaru sees a vision of her previous life, when she was Minamoto no Hikaru. She learns that she fought in battles and that all her friends—Tsuna, Urabe, Sadamitsu and Kintaro—were injured because of Mansairaku. But the Mansairaku Hikaru knows in this life has helped her and her friends. Hikaru is confused and doesn't know what to think. She's also troubled by the fact that she's the one causing the strange incidents and putting the people around her in danger. Then Mansairaku shows up and says that the two of them are the only ones who can fix things. Around the same time, as Tsuna, Sadamitsu and Kintaro are discussing the strange incidents that have been happening in Tokyo, a big earthquake suddenly hits. Worried, Tsuna calls Hikaru on her cell phone, but she just says good-bye and hangs up. Tsuna and the others set out to look for her, joined by Urabe. When they finally catch up with Hikaru at Tokyo Station, Tsuna tells her they're all there for her and she shouldn't have to bear all the responsibility herself. They band together to stop the madness.

### EPISODE 23

Mansairaku tells Hikaru to go to the dimensional rift in Tokyo Station before sunset. Hoping to see Mansairaku there, Hikaru and the others go looking for the rift. Sunset nears, but they're still unable to find it. Another big earthquake hits, and all the train platforms in Tokyo Station are closed.

### FINAL EPISODE

Hikaru wants to save Tokyo and all the people who risked their lives for her. From a train platform in Tokyo Station, she steps into the place that spawned all the terrible incidents.



## Gankutsuou

» www.gankutsuou.com
TV Asahi
Creator: Alexandre Dumas
Director: Maeda Mahiro

### STORY

A young Parisian nobleman named Albert travels to the moon with his friend Franz in an attempt to alleviate the boredom of his life. There they meet the strange Count of Monte Cristo. Long ago, Albert's father arranged for the Count to take the blame for a crime he didn't commit, and then he married the Count's fiancée (Albert's mother). Now the Count is out for revenge, and he's targeting Albert along with his parents. But Albert trusts the Count, and in his naïve eyes, the Count sees the innocent boy he himself once was. Will Albert's purity protect him from the Count's vengeance?

### EPISODE 11

The incident with the poison turns out to be part of a series of attacks targeting the Villefort, Danglars and Morcerf families. Franz has always felt that there was something suspicious about the Count of Monte Cristo, and he blames him. But Albert absolutely adores the Count and refuses to believe that it could possibly be his doing. Then Albert receives a message from the Danglars, annulling his engagement with their daughter Eugenie.

### EPISODE 12

Count Danglars decided to have Eugenie marry someone else in hopes of getting his hands on more riches. But when Albert learns that he's no longer engaged to her, he realizes just how much she means to him. He heads to the opera house where Eugenie is performing, but Danglars turns him away. With the help of a friend, he manages to get in and talk to Eugenie.

## Genseishin Justirisers

» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/justirisers
» www.toho-a-park.com/character/justirisers
TV Tokyo
Directors: Teruyoshi Ishii & Tsutomu Kashima

### EPISODE 11

To prevent the Stella Plate from getting into Dr. Zora's hands, Shota and the others head to Mt. Nakao and split up to look for plate fragments. During the search, a young man dressed like a bandit appears in front of Yuka and introduces himself as Hiroyuki, a descendant of the guardians of the Stella Plate. Believing he's telling the truth, Yuka offers to protect the Stella Plate in his place, but then a Cyber Knight monster suddenly attacks her!

### EPISODE 12

Shota and his friends go to the hospital to visit Yuka, who was injured in the battle against the Cyber Knight monster. While there, Hiroyuki tells Shinya a shocking fact: When all the pieces of the Stella Plates are destroyed, Kaiser Hadess will be resurrected! Shota and the others set out in search of the remaining plate fragments, aided by Hiroyuki's special powers. But when they finally find one, another Cyber Knight shows up and destroys it! On top of that, he summons two Cyber Beasts who then attack the Risers. Shota and the others are definitely in for a tough fight!

### EPISODE 13

The group finally finds a fragment of the Stella Plate. But some kind of misunderstanding leads Shota's father Gentaro to walk out with the plate, despite the fact that he doesn't even know its significance! Before he can get far, a Cyber Knight attacks him and tries to steal the plate. Shota and the others arrive on the scene just in the nick of time, but Gentaro, who had no idea about the Risers' battles or anything else, is shocked to find out what they're involved in. He demands to know what's going on, but Shota and the others can't figure out how to explain it to him. Then they receive a signal saying that another Cyber Beast has shown up in town. All the Risers immediately head to the scene. Gentaro decides to follow them, curious about what his son has gotten himself into.

## Genshiken

» www.genshiken.info
Chiba TV
Creator: Shimoku Kio
Director: Takashi Ikehata

### EPISODE 10

It's summer, and the Genshiken members head for the ocean. But Madarame and some others refuse to get in the water, saying crazy things like they're trying to preserve their energy and having a sunburn at the upcoming Comic Festival would be embarrassing. Even Sasahara's little sister, who has her eye on Kohsaka, shows up.

### EPISODE 11

Kohsaka's room is a chaotic mess of anime and game stuff. Saki trips and bangs her head on a video game console, which puts her in a very bad mood. The last straw is when she hits her head in the *same* place while she's in the club room—she decides to go on a cleaning spree. She picks up all sorts of junk and old amateur manga and then pauses for a smoke, which accidentally starts a fire! Saki takes responsibility for the fire, and by way of apology ends up wearing a costume at the school festival.

### FINAL EPISODE

As a result of the fire, the Genshiken club has been forbidden to use the club room at the school. They start meeting at each other's houses, but the overall mood is bleak. Then Madarame suddenly jumps up and says something that makes Saki cry. The fire really traumatized her, and she feels responsible for the club's problems. Even worse, the Genshiken club's punishment for the fire is volunteer work...on the same day as the winter Comic Festival!

## Get Ride! Amdriver

» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/amdriver
TV Tokyo
Director: Isamu Torada

### EPISODE 37

Wilcott, the man in charge of the Amdriver organization, orders Jenus's group to Elba, and they obey. Much to their surprise, Wilcott is there waiting for them! They're even more confused when Wilcott wants to hire them to arrange his escape.

### EPISODE 38

The Justice Army attacks Jenus and his friends as soon as they arrive at the base. They are vastly outnumbered, and the Justice Army's new-model Bugchines are far stronger than their predecessors. Will they prevail?

### EPISODE 39

Scene, Nyrguise and Shasha were separated from Jenus's group during their escape from the Justice Army, but they get word that Jenus will be waiting for them at a certain spot. Unfortunately, Cathy has intercepted the message as well, and she attacks the messenger. Not realizing that anything's wrong, Scene and the others hurry toward the meeting place, eager to see their friends again.

### EPISODE 40

Jenus and his friends have fallen into Genovese's trap and are now branded criminals. Mary decides to make a public broadcast that will prove their innocence, but she's unable to gather the right equipment, no matter how frantically she works. Then a certain someone contacts her.

## Harukanaru Toki no Naka de ~Hachiyo Sho~

» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/haruka
» haruka8tv.gamecity.ne.jp
TV Tokyo
Creators: Koei & Tohko Mizuno
Director: Aki Tsunaki

### EPISODE 11

Akane learns that another girl who calls herself "the Maiden of the Guardian Dragon" has shown up in Kyo. During their search for her, Akane and the Hachiyo meet a strange girl with the remarkable ability to control the evil that threatens the city. The girl turns out to be Ran, Temma's missing sister from the modern world!

### EPISODE 12

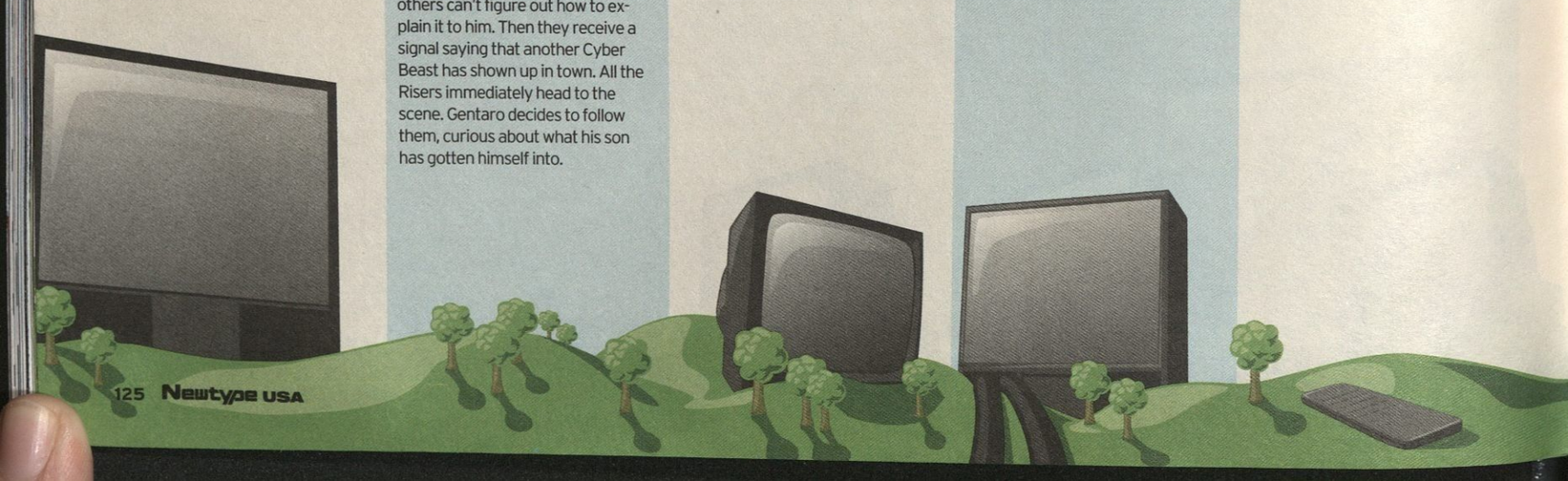
Ran put a curse on Akane that caused her to go into a coma, and she'll die soon unless the curse is removed. Yasuaki offers to use his magic to heal her, but Tomomasa is worried. Why would Ran, who's working with the demons, put a curse on Akane that Yasuaki could so easily cure? Tomomasa senses a darker plot. Around the same time, Akram, the leader of the demons, confronts Temma. Akram offers to release Ran in exchange for Akane.

### EPISODE 13

Akane bravely goes to get Ran back from the demons, and the Hachiyo follow her because none of them wants to lose her. An all-out war between the Hachiyo and demons begins!

### EPISODE 14

Ran and Akane have safely returned to Kyo, but Kyo's four guardian gods Seiryu, Suzaku, Byakko and Genbu are still in the hands of the demons. Akane and the others need to retrieve them in order to save Kyo, but to do so they need certain magical objects hidden somewhere in the city.



## Kamen Rider Blade

» www.toei.co.jp/tv/blade
» www.tv-asahi.co.jp/blade
TV Asahi
Creator: Shotaro Ishinomori
Directors: Hidenori Ishida, Takao Nagaishi, Satoshi Morota & others

### STORY

The four Kamen Riders finally join forces, despite the risk of Hajime's violent alter ego Joker going out of control. But a few people aren't happy about them getting together. One is Kanai (Giraffa Undead), who wants to fight every single Undead until he's the last one standing—then he'll become the new ruler of Earth! Another is ex-BOARD director Tennoji. Tennoji sends the shape-shifting man-made Titan Undead out to attack the Riders, and Kazuma (Kamen Rider Blade) and Sakuya (Kamen Rider Garren) are poisoned by the Undead.

### EPISODE 44

Kazuma and Sakuya go crazy because of Titan Undead's poison, so Hajime and Mutsuki have no choice but to attack their friends. It's all part of Tennoji's vicious scheme.

### EPISODE 45

Tennoji creates the 54th Undead using all the data he's obtained. An ultimate Undead emerges from the fifth ace card!

### EPISODE 46

Tennoji's ultimate Undead has the ability to steal Rouse Cards, and Hajime loses his Chalice card and turns into Joker once again. Elsewhere, Kanai attacks Tennoji in an attempt to become the next ruler of Earth.

### EPISODE 47

Kanai (Giraffa Undead) tries to bind Hajime (Joker) onto a card to end the battle and become the next ruler of Earth. But Sakuya intervenes and engages in a deadly fight with the overwhelmingly powerful Undead.

## Kannazuki no Miko

» www.kannaduki.net
Chiba TV
Creator: Kaishaku
Director: Tetsuya Yanagisawa

### EPISODE 11

Chikane hands Himeko an invitation to the last battle with the Eight Serpents, who are threatening world peace. As a final blow, she swears to kill Himeko and then leaves. In an attempt to comfort the shocked Himeko, Soma takes her hand. The next day, when the Black Moon rises in the sky, Himeko summons the mecha-like Ame no Murakumo, and she and Soma board it. But Soma's body is being destroyed by the curse of the Eight Serpents, and he has little strength left. Moreover, the effects of the curse are accelerated when he's inside the Ame no Murakumo, just like his stepbrother Kazuki warned. But he refuses to tell Himeko. Then Chikane shows up with the glowing ball that is the true form of the Eight Serpents. She demands that Himeko come to her place alone, and then disappears. Himeko and Soma try to follow her, but then eight robots emerge from the glowing ball to block their path!

### FINAL EPISODE

Himeko's sword stabs deep into Chikane's chest. Horrified at what she's done, Himeko attempts to slit her own throat, but Chikane reaches out to stop her. When Chikane's blood touches the tattoo on Himeko's chest, a bright light surrounds them. They have a flashback to a previous life when they were fighting the Eight Serpents. Then Himeko finally remembers everything. She remembers that she was the priestess known as the Kannazuki no Miko, and that she had a mission. She also remembers how the battle ended in her previous life. Himeko hears a shocking truth from Chikane...

## Konjiki no Gashbell!!

» www.toei-anim.co.jp/tv/GB
» www.fujitv.co.jp/b_hp/gasshu
Fuji TV
Creator: Makoto Raiku
Director: Tetsuji Nakamura

### EPISODE 86

Shelly is now confident in her ties to her partner Coco, and she's fearless in battle. She combines forces with Brago and throws a powerful attack at Zofis, who immediately notices that he's in big trouble and decides to run away. Just when Zofis thinks he's escaped the danger, Gash and Kiyomaro appear before him.

### EPISODE 87

Gash is surprised that Brago has prevented him from attacking Zofis. Shelly and Brago insist that they should be the ones to settle the fight with Zofis, and they refuse to cooperate with Kiyomaro and Gash. After Shelly tells Kiyomaro she knows exactly how he feels, Kiyomaro promises he won't meddle in her fight.

### EPISODE 88

Shelly and Brago finally defeat Zofis. Coco returns to her normal gentle self, and Zofis's book is burned. Shelly, Kiyomaro and their partners compliment each other on their bravery, and they return home for some well-deserved rest.

### EPISODE 89

Kyanchome and Folgore barge into Kiyomaro's house. As it turns out, Folgore is going to be in a movie about Victreem, a demon Folgore once defeated. Tio arrives at the scene, and they start brainstorming about the plot.

## KURAU Phantom Memory

» www.kurau.net
TV Asahi
Director: Yasuhiro Irie

### STORY

Many people have fallen victim to the power of the twin Ryna-sapiens Vint and Legel. Their ambition is to fill the world with Ryna-sapiens, using Kurau as a medium. Kurau and Christmas have tried to stop their indiscriminate and deadly use of Rynax power, but a squad from the Global Police Organization (GPO) that controls the power of Rynax appeared in the middle of the struggle. The GPO squad was built up through repeated experiments on Ryna-sapiens. They attack and kill Legel, and the enraged Vint begins chasing after the chief of the GPO, who flees to the moon. Kurau and Christmas head for the moon to save Vint from the GPO and stop him from using his Rynax power. When they arrive on the moon, they find the chief being taken in for questioning about the Ryna-sapiens. Brushing Kurau aside, Vint rushes up to the chief and kills him! But Vint has already used too much Rynax power, and his body begins to deteriorate after the GPO unit attacks him. Then, lots of Rynaxes suddenly emerge from his body and begin attacking people!

### FINAL EPISODE

Kurau and Christmas go all over the city gathering the Rynaxes that hatched from Vint's body. Exhausted, Kurau returns to the world of Rynax, leaving Christmas alone. Ten years have passed since then, and Christmas is now 22 years old. She lives quietly in Switzerland with Mr. and Mrs. Frank. Having overcome the hard times after losing Kurau, she now works at a cozy restaurant. One day, Dag and his 18-year-old son Ted come to visit Christmas. They're pleased to see each other again after such a long time, and have a good time together. But Christmas's face still looks sad on occasion...

## Maho Shoujo Lyrical Nanoha

» nanoha.com
Gifu TV
Creators: Masaki Tsuzuki & ivory
Director: Akiyuki Shinbo

### EPISODE 11

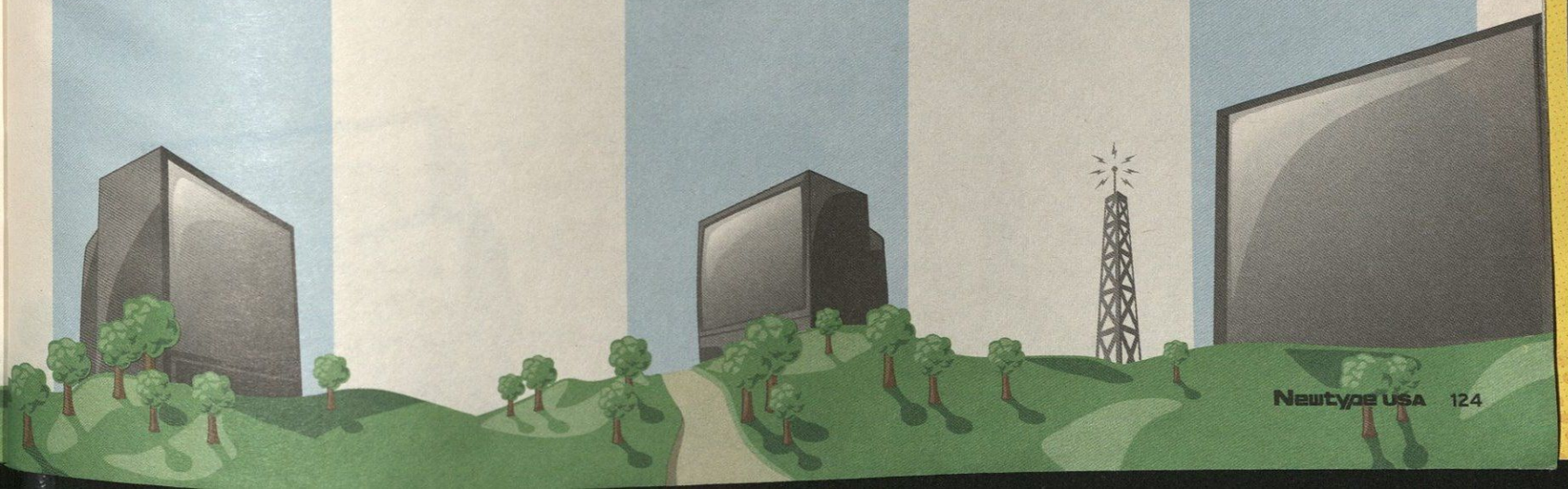
Nanoha hopes to free Fate from her mother Plecia Testarossa so they can be friends. But Fate is still bound to her mother and in search of Jewel Seeds for her. Fate finally decides to fight Nanoha over the Jewel Seeds. The battle heats up as both fight ferociously using their powerful magic. Elsewhere, Chrono and Eimy finally discover Plecia's whereabouts. Just as Lindy sends subordinates to catch Plecia, Fate and Plecia's bitter past is revealed.

### EPISODE 12

Plecia is trying to open a path to an alternate universe using the power of the Jewel Seeds Fate collected. Nanoha and Chrono head to Plecia's mansion to catch her. They make steady progress, beating back enemies one after another. Finally, Chrono, who was separated from Nanoha, finds Plecia at the back of the mansion. Elsewhere, Fate grips her magic wand and makes a bold decision.

### FINAL EPISODE

The Jewel Seed incident is settled for the time being. Knowing Yuno cannot return to his world for some time, Nanoha invites him to stay at her house. She says good-bye to Chrono and goes home with Yuno. Nanoha reunites with family and friends and gets back to her normal life, but she can't help thinking about how Fate might have been treated after she was captured by the Space-Time Management Bureau. Some time later, Chrono contacts Nahoha and tells her what happened to Fate.



## BECK
## MONGOLIAN CHOP SQUAD

» www.beck.ne.jp
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/beck
TV Tokyo
Creator: Harold Sakuishi
Director: Osamu Kobayashi

### EPISODE 11

Koyuki is on a date with Maho during their last summer break before high school. He asks her to become a professional singer with him, but Maho gives an indecisive response, saying they're different people. Then she kisses him and leaves. Some time later, at the Beck concert, the audience is unusually hyper even before the concert begins—the guitarist of the popular band The Dying Breed is secretly there to watch the show!

### EPISODE 12

Koyuki and the others have been invited to a secret Dying Breed concert, but the show was actually a ruse designed to get rid of Ryusuke's rival Eiji. The vocalist Matt burns Eiji's guitar and kicks him out, inviting Koyuki onto the stage. Koyuki sings "moon on the water." His performance is captivating.

### EPISODE 13

Koyuki, Saku and Tanabe form a band for the music competition at the school festival. As they practice, Hyodo and his group laugh at them. The day of the school festival comes, and Tanabe unexpectedly flees the concert! Egged on by Hyodo, the audience begins booing.

## Black Jack

» blackjack.jp
» www.ytv.co.jp/bj
Yomiuri TV & Nippon TV
Creator: Osamu Tezuka
Director: Macoto Tezka

### STORY

Black Jack is an incredibly talented surgeon, but he doesn't have a medical license. He lives with a little girl named Pinoko, who works as his assistant. Sometimes he charges exorbitant fees, but other times he works pro bono. There are always people who need his help...

### EPISODE 10

Miriam tells Black Jack about a man who's 200 years old and in need of aid that only Black Jack can provide. The man says he will pay ten million dollars. Black Jack doesn't believe anyone could possibly live that long, but he follows Miriam to the old man's house. Sure enough, he looks unbelievably old. Apparently he drank the blood of the legendary Phoenix, whose blood grants immortality. The old man did get an immortal body, but he's been suffering from disease for years, unable to die. Black Jack still doesn't believe the story, insisting that it's all superstition, so Miriam decides to take him to a cave where the Bird of Fire is said to live. Miriam says if Black Jack does the operation and it's successful, they'll give him the bird. With the bird at his disposal, he could make an elixir of life and become rich beyond belief. Black Jack successfully operates on the old man, but he's worried that the illness could come back at any time, considering the patient's age.

## BLEACH

» pierrot.jp/title/bleach
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/bleach
TV Tokyo
Creator: Tite Kubo
Director: Noriyuki Abe

### EPISODE 11

Ichigo and Rukia rush to the scene of a Hollow sighting, but the Hollow is gone by the time they arrive. It turns out that one of Ichigo's classmates, a kid named Uryu Ishida, took out the Hollow before Ichigo arrived. Ishida refers to himself as a "Quincy," and for some reason he despises Soul Reapers. He challenges Ichigo to a Hollow-exorcism contest.

### EPISODE 12

The rules of Ishida's contest go like this: They will scatter bait around the city in order to attract Hollows, and whoever takes down the most wins. Since Hollows tend to target people with high paranormal abilities, Ichigo worries about his little sister Karin. He expends his effort trying to protect her, but as it turns out, Karin isn't the only human the Hollows are targeting...

### EPISODE 13

The city is teeming with Hollows, and Tatsuki and Orihime come under attack. Manipulated by an octopus-like Hollow, poor Tatsuki is forced to attack Orihime against his will. Seeing Tatsuki suffer like that brings about a change in Orihime. Rage and frustration well up within her, awakening a dormant power—the power to erect a shield and repel attacks.

### EPISODE 14

The Quincy is a race of exorcists who were born and bred for the purpose of fighting Hollows. They were all but eradicated at the hands of the Soul Reapers, who claimed that killing the Quincy would restore balance to the world. Ishida is the last of the Quincy, and he intends to teach the Soul Reapers a thing or two about Quincy power. Ishida attempts to take on a whole throng of Hollows by himself, but Ichigo offers to lend a hand.

## Bobobo-bo Bo-bobo

» www.bo-bobo.com
» www.toei-anim.co.jp/tv/bo-bobo
» www.tv-asahi.co.jp/bo-bobo
TV Asahi
Creator: Yoshio Sawai
Director: Hiroki Shibata

### EPISODE 39

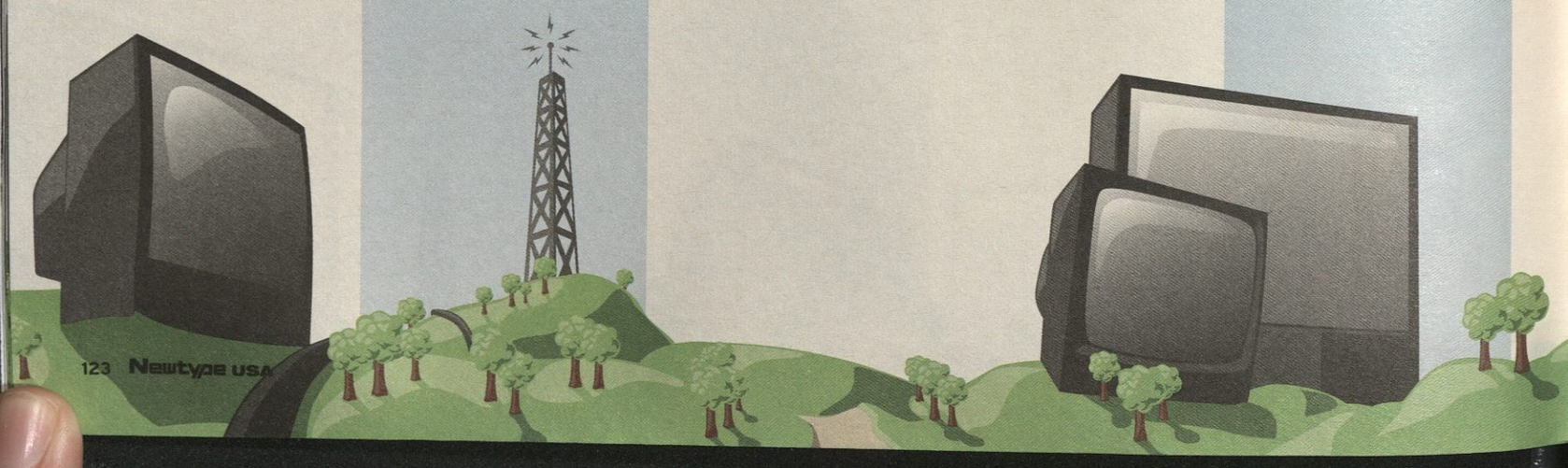
Beauty and Suzu are captured and trapped in Hell's Gum. It's all part of a cunning trap set by three vicious siblings working under Halekulani. Hell's Gum stinks so bad it practically kills off anyone inside, and Beauty and Suzu are on the verge of succumbing!

### EPISODE 40

While fighting the three siblings, Bobobo pulls off a Fist of the Nose Hair technique called the Bo-bobo Roulette. He turns himself into a roulette pointer and points at the names of attacks he wants to execute. Bo-bobo's rapid attacks inflict damage on the three siblings.

### EPISODE 41

Bo-bobo and the others finally face the evil Halekulani. But in the blink of an eye, Suzu and Tennosuke find themselves turned into coins, and the rest are warped into an imaginary game world. The place looks like an ordinary board game, but each cell is a deadly trap! Moreover, every time the players move closer to the goal, their energy is drained!



## Bouken Oh Beet—Beet the Vandel Buster

» www.toei-anim.co.jp/tv/beet
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/beet
TV Tokyo
Creators: Riku Sanjo & Koji Inada
Director: Tatsuya Nagamine

### EPISODE 12

Vandel and Beltorze appear in front of Beet. They're the ones who killed the very powerful Zenon warriors led by Beet's brother. Beet uses the special attack inherited from his brother, but even at full power, it doesn't damage Beltorze one bit. To make matters worse, the force of the blow shatters Beet's Saiga weapon!

### EPISODE 13

Beet uses up all his power against Beltorze, and he can no longer move. Poala is also immobilized, poisoned by the enemy Grineed she defeated a while ago. Now it's Beltorze's turn to attack them, but Thread shows up and saves Beet and Poala. Thread recognizes that he can't beat Beltorze, so he runs away with the two of them in tow.

### EPISODE 14

Still suffering from the poison inside her body, Poala takes Beet to a small cabin in the forest. While Beet sleeps, the spirits of Zenon warriors in the Saiga weapon encourage him to recover. Beet finally overcomes the psychological damage from the battle and awakens. Inside him resides the power from a Saiga shield that used to belong to one of the Zenon warriors.

## Desert Punk

» www.sunabozu.com
Chubu Nippon Broadcasting
Creator: Masatoshi Usune
Director: Takayuki Inagaki

### STORY

Desert Punk is the baddest dude in the Kanto Desert. One day, a treasure hunter named Kaizuka visits Desert Punk and asks him to be his bodyguard while he looks for treasure. Kaizuka offers so much money that Desert Punk instantly accepts the job—but it turns out that Kaizuka never intended to pay him at all. Kaizuka and his companion Junko (aka the Desert Vixen) strand Desert Punk alone in the desert...

### EPISODE 11

Desert Punk and Kosuna risked their lives working for Kaizuka and didn't get a penny in return. Driven by rage, Desert Punk captures Junko and tells Kosuna that he's going to "take care of" the traitor. He then leaves Kosuna and drags Junko to his secret base. Once they arrive, he tells her that he really just wanted to have her over to his secret base. Junko is convinced she's safe because Desert Punk has a thing for her, but Desert Punk has plans for revenge...

### EPISODE 12

Desert Punk rescues a little girl named Wakame from her kidnappers, but she doesn't seem to appreciate the favor. In fact, she complains about everything. First she gets mad at him for messing up her clothes with desert dust and sand. Then she demands he take her to a restroom, right in the middle of their escape! She's a spoiled, pampered girl who has no consideration for others.

## FAFNER

» www.fafner.jp
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/fafner
TV Tokyo
Director: Nobuyoshi Habara

### EPISODE 23

The Festum Idun attacks a base in Africa and steals the *Fafner Mark Nicht* while it's undergoing final testing. The *Nicht* is a new super-*Fafner* hailed as the last hope for mankind. Elsewhere on Tatsumiya Island, Soshi gets trapped inside the Siegfried system by the roots of a plant-like Festum, and Kazuki and the others rush to save him.

### EPISODE 24

Idun, who has merged with the *Mark Nicht*, attacks Tatsumiya Island, and Soshi is among the many casualties. Carried by the power of his fury, Kazuki attacks Idun, but the attack is unsuccessful, and the Festum flees. A few days later, the people of Tatsumiya Island are asked to take part in an upcoming battle in the Arctic. The odds of survival are low, but Fumihiko doesn't think they have a choice. Tatsumiya Island is enveloped in a shroud of fear and worry, and to make matters worse, two Festum show up. But instead of attacking the island, they start fighting each other. The red Festum wins and destroys the other one. Soon after, Fumihiko receives an unexpected message.

### FINAL EPISODE

The war with the Festum has continued for a long time, but now humanity has a plan to end it once and for all. Maya writes the coordinates for Tatsumiya Island on the arms of Kazuki, Kenji, Kanon and herself. The numbers signify their promise to return alive. The sun begins to rise, and Tsubaki and the others watch as the four pilots board the transport that will carry them and their *Fafners* to the Arctic...

## Final approach

» www.trinet-ent.com/princess_hour
TV Kanagawa
Creator: PrincessSoft
Director: Tenshi Yamamoto

### STORY

Ryo Mizuhara is an ordinary high school boy who lives with his sister Akane. One day, a beautiful girl named Shizuka Masuda barges into their house, claiming to be Ryo's fiancée. Ever since that day, Ryo and those around him have found themselves embroiled in all sorts of trouble because of Shizuka. Ryo and Akane eventually adapt to life with Shizuka, and everything seems to be returning to normal—until a mysterious man appears.

### EPISODE 11

Everyone's wondering how a classy lady like Shizuka ended up at the Mizuhara residence, so Shizuka tells them the truth. Afterwards, Shizuka seems very sad, and Ryo and Akane don't know what to do.

### EPISODE 12

Peace has finally been restored at the Mizuhara residence (and also at Ryo's school). At first, everyone seems relieved to have their quiet lives back, but after a while they begin to feel odd. Something is missing, and Ryo, Akane, Emiho and Miki all feel it. Ryo finally decides to head to a certain location...

### FINAL EPISODE

Ryo's day begins with Shizuka desperately attempting to win his heart, just like always. But when she's joined by a bunch of other cute girls, all vying for this attention, they create a huge commotion. Will Ryo ever find true love...and peace?!

## FUTAKOI

» www.starchild.co.jp/special/hutakoi
» www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/futakoi
TV Tokyo
Director: Nobuo Tomizawa

### EPISODE 11

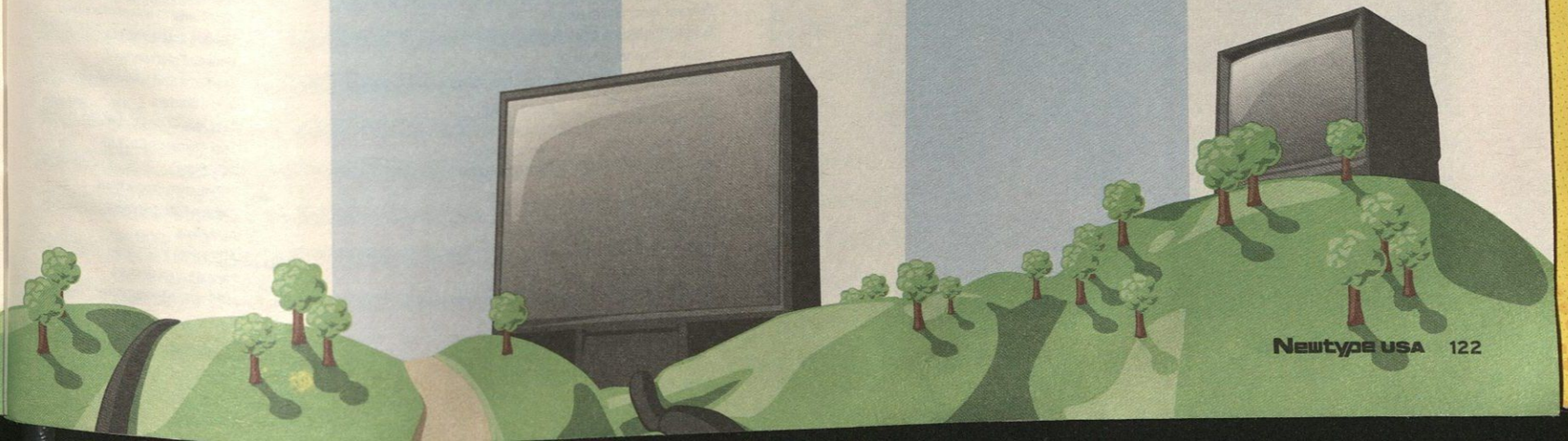
On New Year's Day, the Sakurazuki sisters visit a shrine to make their first wish of the new year—both sisters hope to enroll in Nozomu's school. Nozomu is flattered that the Sakurazuki sisters are thinking about him so intensely, but he can't stop thinking about Kaoruko and Yuya. Just then, Yuya and Kaoruko show up with Sumireko to make their first wishes at the shrine. Then Gonda and a bunch of other guys who follow the Ichijo sisters around show up to warn Yuya to keep his dirty paws off them, and Gonda even challenges Yuya to a duel! Nozomu, who's been stringing both the Ichijo sisters and the Sakurazuki sisters along, is impressed by Gonda's macho attitude.

### EPISODE 12

When the Sakurazuki sisters' butler Kenmochi sees them upset because of Nozomu's indecisiveness, he forbids them from going to school and tries to get them to transfer back to their previous school. Nozomu and others worry about them not showing up for school. Some people try to call them, but Kenmochi doesn't put them through to the girls. No one can get in touch with them, and their mansion is completely shut off from the outside. But the Sakurazuki sisters decide to escape in order to give Nozomu Valentine's Day chocolate.

### FINAL EPISODE

Nozomu receives some chocolates with love from each of the Sakurazuki and Ichijo sisters. He doesn't know what to do, since he'll end up hurting everyone's feelings if this situation continues. But he concludes that it's not his fault—it's the Futagozuka curse! Miyabi lectures Nozomu about his rude attitude toward women, telling him he should respond to them more honestly.



# New Releases – MARCH 2005

## MANGA & MANHWA

| TITLE | PUBLISHER |
|---|---|
| Ai Yori Aoshi Vol. 8 | TOKYOPOP |
| Alien Nine Ultimate DVD & GN Collection | CPM Manga |
| Angel Sanctuary Vol. 7 GN | VIZ |
| Angel Shop Vol. 1 GN | CPM Manga |
| Arm of Kannon Vol. 5 | TOKYOPOP |
| B'TX Vol. 8 | TOKYOPOP |
| BB Explosion Vol. 4 GN | VIZ |
| Beet the Vandel Buster Vol. 4 GN | VIZ |
| Berserk Vol. 7 TPB | Dark Horse Comics |
| Beyblade Vol. 4 GN | VIZ |
| Blade of Heaven Vol. 1 | TOKYOPOP |
| Bleach Vol. 6 TPB | VIZ |
| Boys Be...Vol. 3 | TOKYOPOP |
| Boys Over Flowers Vol. 11 TPB | VIZ |
| By the Sword Vol. 1 | ADV Manga |
| Chronicles of the Cursed Sword Vol. 11 | TOKYOPOP |
| Chrono Crusade Vol. 4 | ADV Manga |
| CLAMP School Paranormal Investigators Vol. 3 | TOKYOPOP |
| Couple Vol. 4 GN | CPM Manga |
| Crescent Moon Vol. 5 | TOKYOPOP |
| Cromartie High School Vol. 1 | ADV Manga |
| Cyborg 009 Vol. 10 | TOKYOPOP |
| Dead End Vol. 1 | TOKYOPOP |
| Dragon Ball Z Vol. 19 TPB | VIZ |
| Faeries' Landing Vol. 8 | TOKYOPOP |
| Flame of Recca Vol. 11 TPB | VIZ |
| Fushigi Yugi Vol. 14 GN | VIZ |
| Ghost in the Shell 2 Ani-Manga Boxed Set | VIZ |
| Girl Got Game Vol. 8 | TOKYOPOP |
| GTO Vol. 23 | TOKYOPOP |
| Gundam SEED Vol. 4 GN | Del Rey Manga |
| Gunslinger Girl Vol. 2 | ADV Manga |
| Hana-Kimi Vol. 5 GN | VIZ |
| Hard Boiled Angel: Angel Detective Vol. 1 GN | CPM Manga |
| Hunter X Hunter Vol. 1 TPB | VIZ |
| Hyper Police Vol. 2 | TOKYOPOP |
| I's Vol. 1 GN | VIZ |
| Infinite Ryvius Vol. 2 TPB | DrMaster |
| Instant Teen: Just Add Nuts Vol. 3 | TOKYOPOP |
| InuYasha Ani-Manga Vol. 8 TPB | VIZ |
| InuYasha Vol. 21 TPB | VIZ |
| Jing: King of Bandits – Twilight Tales Vol. 3 | TOKYOPOP |
| Junk Force Vol. 1 Novel | DrMaster |
| Junk Force Vol. 2 | DrMaster |
| Kare Kano Vol. 14 | TOKYOPOP |
| Kids Joker Vol. 1 | ADV Manga |
| Kung Fu Jungle Boy Vol. 1 GN | CPM Manga |
| Let's Stay Together Forever GN | CPM Manga |
| Love or Money Vol. 2 | TOKYOPOP |
| Lupin III – World's Most Wanted Vol. 4 | TOKYOPOP |
| Mahoromatic: Automatic Maiden Vol. 5 | TOKYOPOP |
| Megaman NT Warrior Vol. 7 GN | VIZ |
| Miss Me GN | CPM Manga |
| Mouryou Kiden: Legend of the Nymph Vol. 2 | TOKYOPOP |
| Mythical Detective Loki Ragnarok Vol. 2 | ADV Manga |
| Mythology of the Heavens Vol. 3: Rise of the Dragon GN | CPM Manga |
| Naruto Vol. 6 TPB | VIZ |
| Neck and Neck Vol. 2 | TOKYOPOP |
| Negima Vol. 5 GN | Del Rey Manga |
| Noodle Fighter Miki Vol. 1 | ADV Manga |
| Orphen Vol. 1 | ADV Manga |
| Othello Vol. 3 GN | Del Rey Manga |
| Peacemaker Kurogane Vol. 3 | ADV Manga |
| Pita-Ten Vol. 8 | TOKYOPOP |
| Planet Ladder Vol. 7 | TOKYOPOP |
| President Dad Vol. 2 | TOKYOPOP |
| Pretty Maniacs Vol. 1 TPB | DrMaster |
| Project Arms Vol. 8 TPB | VIZ |
| Psychic Academy Vol. 7 | TOKYOPOP |
| The Queen's Knight Vol. 3 | TOKYOPOP |
| RahXephon Vol. 3 GN | VIZ |
| Record of Lodoss War: Welcome to Lodoss Island Book One | CPM Manga |
| Saikano Vol. 4 GN | VIZ |
| Saiyuki Vol. 7 | TOKYOPOP |

## MANGA & MANHWA

| TITLE | PUBLISHER |
|---|---|
| Samurai Executioner: Ten Fingers, One Life Vol. 5 TPB | Dark Horse Comics |
| Sgt. Frog Vol. 7 | TOKYOPOP |
| Slayers Super Explosive Demon Story Vol. 8 TPB | CPM Manga |
| Slayers Vol. 3 | TOKYOPOP |
| Snow Drop Vol. 8 | TOKYOPOP |
| Sorcerer Hunters Authentic Relaunch Vol. 1 | TOKYOPOP |
| Super Manga Blast! #50 | Dark Horse Comics |
| Threads of Time Vol. 4 | TOKYOPOP |
| Tokyo Babylon Vol. 6 | TOKYOPOP |
| Tori Koro Vol. 1 TPB | DrMaster |
| Tough Vol. 2 GN | VIZ |
| Tuxedo Gin Vol. 11 TPB | VIZ |
| Video Girl Ai Vol. 11 TPB | VIZ |
| Yu-Gi-Oh! Duelist Vol. 3 TPB | VIZ |

## DVD

| TITLE | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|
| A Tree of Palme | ADV Films |
| Air Master (Vol. 1) | Toei Animation Co., Ltd |
| Air Master (Vol. 2) | Toei Animation Co., Ltd |
| Aquarian Age: The Movie | Synch-Point |
| Black Jack Collection 2 | Central Park Media |
| Black Jack (Vol. 7) | Central Park Media |
| Boys Over Flowers (Vol. 10) | VIZ |
| Burn-Up Scramble (Vol. 3) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Case Closed: Case 04: Dubious Intent (Vol. 5) | FUNimation Productions |
| Chrono Crusade: The Devil to Pay (Vol. 4) | ADV Films |
| Cromartie High School: Cromartian Rhapsody (Vol. 1 also w/ box + manga) | ADV Films |
| Cyber City: Final Collection | Central Park Media |
| Cyberteam in Akihabara: Cyber History (Vol. 3) | ADV Films |
| Cybuster (Vol. 3) | Geneon Entertainment |
| D•N•Angel: Facets of Darkness (Vol. 3) | ADV Films |
| The Daichis (Vol. 2) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Daphne in the Brilliant Blue (Vol. 1 also w/ box) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Divergence Eve: Welcome to Watcher's Nest (Vol. 1) | ADV Films |
| Dragon Ball Z TV #42: Great Seiyaman: Opening Ceremony (also w/ box) | FUNimation Productions |
| The Five Star Stories | ADV Films |
| Fushigi Yugi: The Mysterious Play (Vol. 5) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Gantz (Vol. 2) | ADV Films |
| Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex (Vol. 5) | Bandai Ent. / Manga Ent. |
| Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex SE (Vol. 5) | Bandai Ent. / Manga Ent. |
| Gravion Zwei: Eye of the Storm (Vol. 1 also w/ box) | ADV Films |
| Gundam SEED (Vol. 8) | Bandai Entertainment |
| Gundam SEED (Vol. 9) | Bandai Entertainment |
| Gungrave (Vol. 5) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Hanaukyo Maid Team (Vol. 2) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Ikki Tousen (Vol. 4) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Koi Kaze (Vol. 1 also w/ box) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Midori Days (Vol. 1 also w/ box) | Media Blasters |
| Nana 7 of 7 (Vol. 5) | Media Blasters |
| Neon Genesis Evangelion: Platinum Edition (Vol. 6) | ADV Films |
| New Getter Robo (Vol. 1 also w/ box) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Otogi Zoshi (Vol. 1 also w/ box) | Media Blasters |
| Paranoia Agent (Vol. 3) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Patlabor TV (Vol. 10) | Central Park Media |
| Peacemaker: A Path to Destruction (Vol. 4) | ADV Films |
| Petite Princess Yucie: Love & Light (Vol. 3) | ADV Films |
| Please Twins! (Vol. 3) | Bandai Entertainment |
| Princess Tutu: Traum (Vol. 2) | ADV Films |
| Rumiko Takahashi: Anthology (Vol. 2) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Samurai Champloo (Vol. 2) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Shingu: Secret of the Stellar Wars (Vol. 1 also w/ box & T-shirt) | The Right Stuf International |
| Shura no Toki (Vol. 3) | Media Blasters |
| Slam Dunk (Vol. 1) | Toei Animation Co., Ltd |
| Slam Dunk (Vol. 2) | Toei Animation Co., Ltd |
| Sorcerer Hunters (Vol. 3) – Essential Anime | ADV Films |
| Spiral (Vol. 3) | FUNimation Productions |
| Star Ocean EX (Vol. 2) | Geneon Entertainment |
| Wandaba Style: Warp Speed (Vol. 2) | ADV Films |
| Wedding Peach (Vol. 10) | ADV Films |
| Wolf's Rain (Vol. 6) | Bandai Entertainment |
| Yu-Gi-Oh!: Back to Battle City (Vol. 28 also w/ box) | FUNimation Productions |
| Zoids Chaotic Century (Vol. 7) | VIZ |

## GAME

| TITLE | PLATFORM | PUBLISHER |
|---|---|---|
| 25 to Life | PS2 | Eidos |
| Ape Escape | PSP | Sony |
| Armored Core | PSP | Agetec |
| Bomberman | DS | Hudson Soft |
| Darkstalkers | PSP | Capcom |
| Devil May Cry 3 | PS2 | Capcom |
| Digimon World 4 | PS2 | Bandai |
| Donkey Kong Jungle Beat | GC | Nintendo |
| Doom 3 | XBX | Activision |
| Dragon Ball Z: Sagas | GC, PS2, XBX | Atari |
| Dynasty Warriors | DS, PSP | KOEI |
| Enthusia Pro Racing | PS2 | Konami |
| FIFA Street | GC, PS2, XBX | EA Big |
| Fight Night Round 2 | GC, PS2, XBX | EA Sports |
| Ghost Recon 2 | GC | Ubi Soft |
| God of War | PS2 | Sony |
| Gran Turismo 4 | PS2, PSP | Sony |
| Hot Shots Golf | PSP | Sony |
| Iron Phoenix | XBX | Sammy Studios |
| Mario Party Advance | GBA | Nintendo |
| Mega Man Anniversary Collection | GBA, XBX | Capcom |
| Metal Gear Acid | PSP | Konami |
| Musashi: Samurai Legend | PS2 | Square Enix |
| Pokémon Dash | DS | Nintendo |
| Puyo Pop Fever | PSP | Sega |
| Rainbow Six: Lockdown | GC, PC, PS2, XBX | Ubi Soft |
| Rave Master: Special Attack Force! | GBA | Konami |
| Rayman | DS | Ubi Soft |
| Red Ninja: End of Honor | PS2, XBX | Midway |
| Retro Atari Classics | DS | Atari |
| Ridge Racer | PSP | Namco |
| Rise of the Kasai | PS2 | Sony |
| Star Wars: Republic Commando | PC, XBX | LucasArts |
| Super Monkey Ball Deluxe | PS2, XBX | Sega |
| TimeSplitters: Future Perfect | GC, PS2, XBX | EA Games |
| WarioWare: Twisted! | GBA | Nintendo |
| Yoshi's Touch & Go | DS | Nintendo |
| Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour | DS | Konami |

GBA - Game Boy Advance GC - GameCube DS - Nintendo DS PS2 - PlayStation 2 XBX - Xbox

**All release dates are subject to change without notification.**

# Monthly Sales

## DVD

| RANK | TITLE | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Yu-Gi-Oh! The Movie | Warner Home Video |
| 2 | InuYasha 2: The Castle Beyond the Looking Glass | VIZ |
| 3 | Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence | Dreamworks |
| 4 | InuYasha: Affections Touching Across Time | VIZ |
| 5 | Spirited Away | Disney |
| 6 | Dragon Ball GT: Hero's Legacy | FUNimation Productions |
| 7 | Princess Mononoke | Disney |
| 8 | Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex (Vol. 3) | Bandai Ent. /Manga Ent. |
| 9 | Wolf's Rain: Recollection (Vol. 4) | Bandai Entertainment |
| 10 | Yu Yu Hakusho: Tempting Fate (Vol. 27) | FUNimation Productions |

Source: Nielsen VideoScan, December 2004

## MANGA

| RANK | TITLE | PUBLISHER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hellsing Vol. 5 TPB | Dark Horse Comics |
| 2 | Fruits Basket Vol. 6 GN | TOKYOPOP |
| 3 | Battle Royale Vol. 10 GN | TOKYOPOP |
| 4 | Rurouni Kenshin Vol. 9 TPB | VIZ |
| 5 | InuYasha Vol. 20 TPB | VIZ |
| 6 | Naruto Vol. 5 TPB | VIZ |
| 7 | Yu-Gi-Oh! The Movie Ani-Manga | VIZ |
| 8 | Samurai Deeper Kyo Vol. 10 GN | TOKYOPOP |
| 9 | Initial D Vol. 15 | TOKYOPOP |
| 10 | Get Backers Vol. 6 GN | TOKYOPOP |

Source: Diamond Comics, December 2004

# Upcoming Events

## CONVENTIONS

| START | END | CONVENTION | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02/11/05 | 02/13/05 | Numa Rei no Con<br>www.numareinocon.com/ | Alario Center<br>Westwego, LA |
| 02/18/05 | 02/20/05 | Katsucon 11<br>www.katsucon.com/ | Marriott Crystal Gateway/Sheraton Crystal City<br>Arlington, VA |
| 02/25/05 | 02/27/05 | Animaritime 2005<br>www.animaritime.mtaanime.org/ | Mt. Allison University Campus<br>Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada |
| 03/04/05 | 03/06/05 | Anime Overdose<br>www.animeod.com/ | Holiday Inn Golden Gateway<br>San Francisco, CA |
| 03/04/05 | 03/06/05 | Kunicon<br>http://stl.kunicon.com/ | Millennium Hotel<br>St. Louis, MO |
| 03/05/05 | 03/05/05 | Kamecon<br>www.kamecon.com | Manchester Memorial High School<br>Manchester, NH |
| 03/11/05 | 03/13/05 | Anime Detour<br>www.animedetour.com/ | Thunderbird Convention Center<br>Bloomington, MN |
| 03/11/05 | 03/13/05 | Kei-Kon<br>keikon.cjb.net/ | University of Victoria<br>Victoria, British Columbia, Canada |
| 03/11/05 | 03/13/05 | Minami Con 11<br>www.minamicon.org.uk/ | Novotel Hotel<br>Southampton, UK |
| 03/19/05 | 03/19/05 | Recca Con<br>www.reccacon.com/ | Los Medanos College<br>Pittsburg, CA |
| 03/25/05 | 03/27/05 | Anime Oasis 4<br>www.animeoasis.org | Boise Airport Holiday Inn<br>Boise, ID |
| 03/25/05 | 03/27/05 | AniZona<br>www.anizona.org | Embassy Suites Phoenix North<br>Phoenix, AZ |
| 03/25/05 | 03/27/05 | KamiKazeCon<br>www.kamikazecon.com/ | Hyatt Regency Downtown<br>Houston, TX |
| 03/26/05 | 03/26/05 | Kosaikon<br>www.kosaikon.com | Villanova University<br>Villanova, PA |
| 03/26/05 | 03/27/05 | MomoCon<br>www.onegaistudios.com/momo/ | Georgia Tech Student Center<br>Atlanta, GA |
| 03/31/05 | 04/03/05 | Tokyo International Anime Fair<br>www.taf.metro.tokyo.jp/en/ | Tokyo Big Sight East Exhibition Hall 1, 2<br>Tokyo, Japan |
| 04/01/05 | 04/03/05 | Middle Tennessee Anime Convention<br>www.mtac.net/ | Millennium Maxwell House Hotel<br>Nashville, TN |
| 04/02/05 | 04/02/05 | Animarathon 2005<br>www.bgsu.edu/studentlife/organizations/anime/animarathon.html | TBD<br>Bowling Green, OH |
| 04/08/05 | 04/10/05 | SakuraCon<br>www.sakuracon.org/ | Seattle Airport Hilton<br>Seattle, WA |
| 04/08/05 | 04/10/05 | Tekkoshocon<br>www.tekkoshocon.com | Pittsburgh Expomart & Radisson Hotel<br>Pittsburgh, PA |
| 04/09/05 | 04/09/05 | Mini-Con<br>www.mini-con.com | Broken Arrow Community Center<br>Broken Arrow, OK |
| 04/15/05 | 04/17/05 | Jacon<br>www.jacon.org/ | Sheraton World Resort<br>Orlando, FL |
| 04/15/05 | 04/17/05 | NoBrandCon<br>www.nobrandcon.com/ | Plaza Hotel and Suites<br>Eau Claire, WI |
| 04/22/05 | 04/24/05 | Kawaii Kon<br>www.kawaii-kon.org/ | Ala Moana Hotel<br>Honolulu, HI |
| 04/29/05 | 05/01/05 | Anime Boston 2005<br>www.animeboston.com/ | Hynes Convention Center<br>Boston, MA |

翻訳者募集
번역자 구함
TRANSLATORS WANTED

A.D. Vision, Inc. a fast-paced entertainment company, seeks Japanese to English and Korean to English translators. Applicants must have excellent English skills and be fluent in written and spoken forms of the source language (Japanese or Korean). Familiarity with the culture, social customs and comic art (manga/manhwa) of the source language's country of origin are a plus. Experience is helpful, but more importantly, the ideal candidate will bring passion and creativity to translations that can be delivered in a timely manner.

Job duties include, but are not limited to: performing English translations of comic art (manga / manhwa) written in the source language, proofing completed translations of comic art, and performing other translations as required. This position requires computer skills and attention to detail. Applicants must be able to follow established protocols and spot inconsistencies quickly.

Full-time applicants must reside in (or be willing to relocate to) the Houston area. We are also looking for qualified freelance translators.

Please send résumés to:

10114 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. Suite 200
Houston, TX 77099
Attn: Translation
-or-
fax: 713-341-7399
-or-
submit résumé as a
standard MS Word document to:
wkposting@hotmail.com



# New Releases

## DVD

| RELEASE DATE | TITLE | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|---|
| 12/01 | Rozen Maiden Vol. 1 | TBS |
| 12/03 | Spider-Man New Anime Series Vols. 1-2 | Sony Pictures Entertainment |
| 12/08 | OVA Skelter Heaven | King Records |
| 12/10 | Tokyo Daigaku Monogatari Deluxe Edition | Happinet Pictures |
| 12/10 | Hitsuji no Uta SPECIAL BOX | INTERCOMMUNICATIONS |
| 12/10 | SLAM DUNK Vol. 1 | Toei Video |
| 12/15 | KEY THE METAL IDOL DVD BOX | Pony Canyon |
| 12/15 | Movie Konjiki no Gashbell!! 101-banme no Mamono | Shogakukan |
| 12/15 | Mermaid Melody Pichi Pichi Pitchi Pure DVD BOX Vol. 1 | Pony Canyon |
| 12/15 | Yu Yu Hakusho Favorite Edition Box | Pony Canyon |
| 12/15 | Ryusei Sentai Musumet Vol. 1 | Pony Canyon |
| 12/15 | Meitantei Conan Ginyoku no Magician | Universal Pictures Japan |
| 12/21 | Chame Neko Dinga | Happinet Pictures |
| 12/21 | Sakigake!! Otoko Juku Limited Edition DVD BOX | Happinet Pictures |
| 12/21 | Pocket Monsters TV Shudaikashu DVD Perfect Best 1997-2004 | Media Factory |
| 12/21 | Re: Cutie Honey Hito no Maki | Toei Video |
| 12/22 | Mind Game | Rentrak Japan |
| 12/22 | Kaleido Star DVD Omoide BOX | Atlas |
| 12/22 | Boku no Son Goku | avex trax |
| 12/22 | Ninpu Kamui Gaiden DVD BOX collection 1 | avex trax |
| 12/22 | Akazukin Cha-Cha DVD BOX Vols. 1-3 | King Records |
| 12/22 | TV Series Kanon DVD BOX | GENEON ENTERTAINMENT |
| 12/22 | Kannazuki no Miko Vol. 1 | Toshiba Entertainment |
| 12/22 | MONSTER DVD BOX Chapter 1 | VAP |
| 12/22 | Monkey Turn V Vol. 1 | VAP |
| 12/22 | Genshiken Vol. 1 | Toshiba Entertainment |
| 12/22 | UFO Princess Valkyrie DELUXE | Media Factory |
| 12/23 | Cowboy Bebop 5.1ch DVD BOX | Bandai Visual |
| 01/01 | NARUTO 3rd Stage Vol. 1 | Sony Pictures Entertainment |
| 01/07 | Rizelmine DVD BOX Vols. 1-2 | m.o.e. |

## CD SINGLES

| RELEASE DATE | TITLE / ARTIST | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|---|
| 12/22 | Jinki Extend Image Maxi (Blue) / Unicorn table | King Records |
| 12/22 | Jinki Extend Image Maxi (Red) / Aoba Tsuzaki (Fumiko Orikasa) & others | King Records |
| 12/22 | Negima! Mahora Gakuen Chutobu 2-A: Bunkabu Club / Kazumi Asakura (Ayana Sasagawa) & others | King Records |
| 12/22 | MY SAVIOR ~Kitto Soba ni Iru~ / Ayumi Murata | Scitron Digital Contents |
| 12/22 | switch Character Song 3 Kajiyama Keigo / Kazuya Nakai | GENEON ENTERTAINMENT |
| 12/24 | Thousand Nights / Yuki Kaida, Junko Takeuchi & Junko Minagawa | Interchannel |

## CD ALBUMS

| RELEASE DATE | TITLE / ARTIST | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|---|
| 12/15 | Grenadier ~Hohoemi no Senshi~ Original Soundtrack Album | Pony Canyon |
| 12/16 | The Velveteen Rabbit / Noriko Ogawa & Yuki Kajiura | Victor Entertainment |
| 12/22 | Maho-sensei Negima! 3-gakki / Mahora Gakuen Chutobu 2-A | King Records |
| 12/22 | Ace Combat 5: The Unsung War Original Soundtrack | King Records |
| 12/22 | Arc the Lad GENERATION Original Soundtrack | King Records |
| 12/22 | Takaramono / Mami Kingetsu | Konami Music Entertainment |
| 12/22 | Memories Off ~Sore kara~ Vocal Collection | Scitron Digital Contents |
| 12/22 | Ryusei Sentai Musumet Sound Collection / Musumet & others | Scitron Digital Contents |
| 12/22 | W ~Wish~ Sound Collection | Scitron Digital Contents |
| 12/22 | MY-HiME Original Soundtrack Vol. 1 | Lantis |
| 12/22 | Cowboy Bebop TANK! THE! BEST! | Victor Entertainment |
| 12/22 | ETERNAL PREMIUM EDITION Uchu Senkan Yamato YAMATO the Best II | Columbia Music Entertainment |
| 12/22 | Suna Bozu Original Soundtrack | Columbia Music Entertainment |
| 12/22 | Tenchi Muyo! no Shudaika Best Album | GENEON ENTERTAINMENT |
| 12/22 | Futari wa PRECURE Vocal Album 2 VOCAL RAINBOW STORM!! | Marvelous Entertainment |
| 12/22 | Drama CD Magna Carta | Frontier Works |
| 12/22 | Drama CD Pani-Poni Second Season Vol. 2 | Frontier Works |
| 12/22 | Drama CD Hinadori GIRL Vol. 2 | Frontier Works |

# Monthly Sales

## DVD

| RANK | TITLE | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Aladdin Special Edition | Buena Vista Home Entertainment |
| 2 | Aladdin Trilogy Complete Box | Buena Vista Home Entertainment |
| 3 | Kido Senshi Gundam SEED Special Edition Kanketsuhen Meido no Sora (Mecha Box) | Bandai Visual |
| 4 | Innocence Standard Edition | Buena Vista Home Entertainment |
| 5 | Fullmetal Alchemist Vol. 9 | Aniplex |
| 6 | Kido Senshi Gundam SEED Special Edition Kanketsuhen Meido no Sora (Character Box) | Bandai Visual |
| 7 | Fullmetal Alchemist Vol. 10 | Aniplex |
| 8 | Initial-D Fourth Stage Vol. 3 | avex trax |
| 9 | Kido Senshi Gundam SEED Special Edition II Harukanaru Akatsuki | Bandai Visual |
| 10 | Kokaku Kidotai S.A.C. 2nd GIG 08 | Bandai Visual |

## CD SINGLES

| RANK | TITLE | ARTIST | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Akatsuki no Kuruma (Mobile Suit Gundam SEED) | FictionJunction YUUKA | Victor Entertainment |
| 2 | Negima! Mahora Gakuen Chutobu 2-A 1-gatsu: Yami no Fukuin & Doll (Maho Sensei Negima!) | Yami no Fukuin & Doll (Yuki Matsuoka & others) | King Records |
| 3 | innocent starter | Nana Mizuki | King Records |
| 4 | Scramble (School Rumble) | Yui Horie with UNSCANDAL | King Records |
| 5 | HIT IN THE USA (BECK) | BEAT CRUSADERS | DefSTAR Records |
| 6 | Megane o Hazusu Yoru (The Prince of Tennis) | Yushi Oshitari (Hidenobu Kiuchi) | Interchannel |
| 7 | Life is Like a Boat (BLEACH) | Rie fu | Palm Beach |
| 8 | Rewrite (Fullmetal Alchemist) | ASIAN KUNG-FU GENERATION | Ki/oon Records |
| 9 | Neko Mimi Mode (Tsukuyomi -MOON PHASE-) | Dimitri From Paris | Victor Entertainment |
| 10 | Negima! Mahora Gakuen Chutobu 2-A 12-gatsu: Yukihiro Ayaka (Maho Sensei Negima!) | Ayaka Yukihiro (Junko Minagawa) | King Records |

## CD ALBUMS

| RANK | TITLE | ARTIST | DISTRIBUTOR |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hagane no Renkinjyutsushi COMPLETE BEST (Fullmetal Alchemist) | — | Aniplex |
| 2 | NARUTO Best Hit Collection | — | Aniplex |
| 3 | BEST OF INUYASHA Seifu Meigetsu ~InuYasha Theme Zenshu 2~ | — | avex trax |
| 4 | Tennis no Ouji-sama On the Radio Monthly Special Box 2 | — | Interchannel |
| 5 | School Rumble: Eri Sawachika | Eri Sawachika (Yui Horie) | King Records |
| 6 | Initial-D Fourth Stage SOUND FILES | — | avex trax |
| 7 | Kido Senshi Gundam SEED COMPLETE BEST | — | Sony Music Associated Records |
| 8 | FAFNER in the azure ~NO WHERE~ ~Sokyu no FAFNER BGM & Drama Album I~ | — | King Records |
| 9 | AA (Kono Minikuku mo Utsukushii Sekai) | Ayako Kawasumi & Ai Shimizu | GENEON ENTERTAINMENT |
| 10 | SHUFFLE! Character Original Vocal Album Shuffle Time | Sayaka Aoki & others | Lantis |

## MANGA

| RANK | TITLE | ARTIST | PUBLISHER |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kareshi Kanojo no Jijo 19 | Masami Tsuda | Hakusensha |
| 2 | NARUTO 24 | Masashi Kishimoto | Shueisha |
| 3 | Meitantei Conan 47 | Gosho Aoyama | Shogakukan |
| 4 | PLUTO 1 | Naoki Urasawa & Osamu Tezuka | Shogakukan |
| 5 | Black Jack ni Yoroshiku 10 | Shuho Sato | Kodansha |
| 6 | Skip Beat! 8 | Yoshiki Nakamura | Hakusensha |
| 7 | Aishiteru ze, Baby! ★★ 6 | Yoko Maki | Shueisha |
| 8 | D.Gray-man 1 | Katsura Hoshino | Shueisha |
| 9 | 20-seiki Shonen 17 | Naoki Urasawa | Shogakukan |
| 10 | Eye Shield 21 10 | Riichiro Inagaki & Yusuke Murata | Shueisha |

DVD and CD data by Oricon; www.oricon.co.jp
Source: Nippan survey, October 31, 2004

# Reader Poll Rankings

***NEWTYPE* JAPAN READERS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE CHARACTERS AND ANIME...**

## TOP 20 MOST POPULAR ANIME

| RANK | TITLE |
|---|---|
| 1 | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 2 | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED |
| 3 | FAFNER |
| 4 | Mobile Suit Z Gundam |
| 5 | Fullmetal Alchemist |
| 6 | MY-HiME |
| 7 | Gankutsuou |
| 8 | Mobile Suit Gundam |
| 9 | Neon Genesis Evangelion |
| 10 | Cowboy Bebop |
| 11 | School Rumble |
| 12 | Kyo kara Ma-O! |
| 13 | Ghost in the Shell |
| 14 | Kannazuki no Miko |
| 15 | Genshiken |
| 16 | Kokaku Kidotai S.A.C. 2nd GIG |
| 17 | Galaxy Angel |
| 18 | Gundam Wing |
| 19 | Top o Nerae! |
| 20 | Meine Liebe |

## TOP 10 MALE CHARACTERS

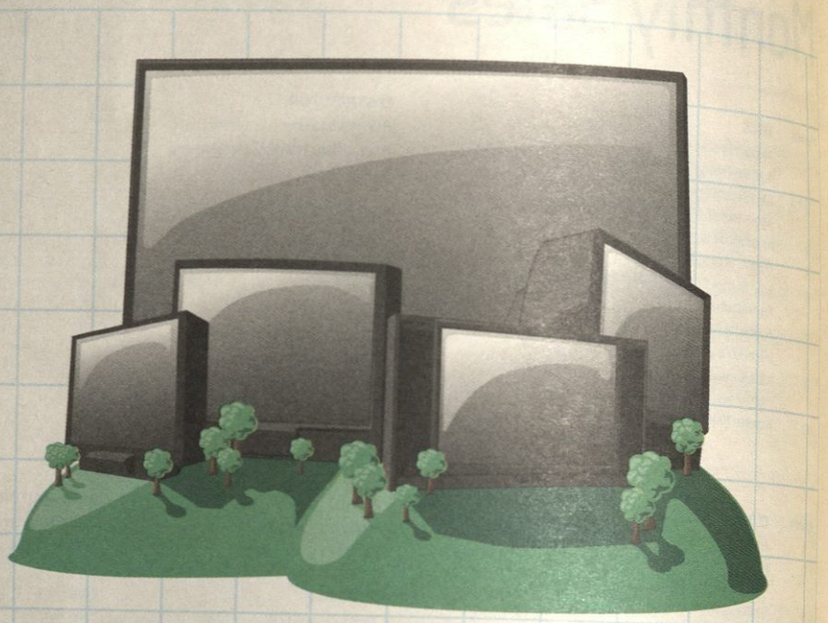
| RANK | CHARACTER NAME | TITLE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Athrun Zala | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED *DESTINY* |
| 2 | Kira Yamato | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 3 | Shin Asuka | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 4 | Edward Elric | Fullmetal Alchemist |
| 5 | Kazuki Makabe | FAFNER |
| 6 | Yzak Joule | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 7 | Kamille Bidan | Mobile Suit Z Gundam |
| 8 | Char Aznable | Mobile Suit Z Gundam |
| 9 | Ray the Barrel | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 10 | Keroro | Sergeant KERORO |

## TOP 10 FEMALE CHARACTERS

| RANK | CHARACTER NAME | TITLE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lacus Clyne | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 2 | Stella Loussier | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 3 | Cagalli Yula Athha | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 4 | Lunamaria Hawke | Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY |
| 5 | Mai Tokiha | MY-HiME |
| 6 | Riza Hawkeye | Fullmetal Alchemist |
| 7 | Winry Rockbell | Fullmetal Alchemist |
| 8 | Maya Tomi | FAFNER |
| 9 | Rei Ayanami | Neon Genesis Evangelion |
| 10 | Motoko Kusanagi | Kokaku Kidotai S.A.C. 2nd GIG |

# ANIME LAND

ANIME LAND IS JAM-PACKED WITH INFORMATION TO QUENCH YOUR THIRST FOR ALL THAT IS ANIME! IT CONTAINS AN EPISODE GUIDE OF SHOWS CURRENTLY AIRING IN JAPAN, US TV LISTINGS, AS WELL AS NEW RELEASE AND TOP-SELLING ITEM DATA FOR BOTH THE US AND JAPAN. AFTER YOU'VE READ ALL THE TV INFO, GET OFF YOUR COUCH AND OUT INTO THE WORLD USING OUR CONVENTION LISTING!



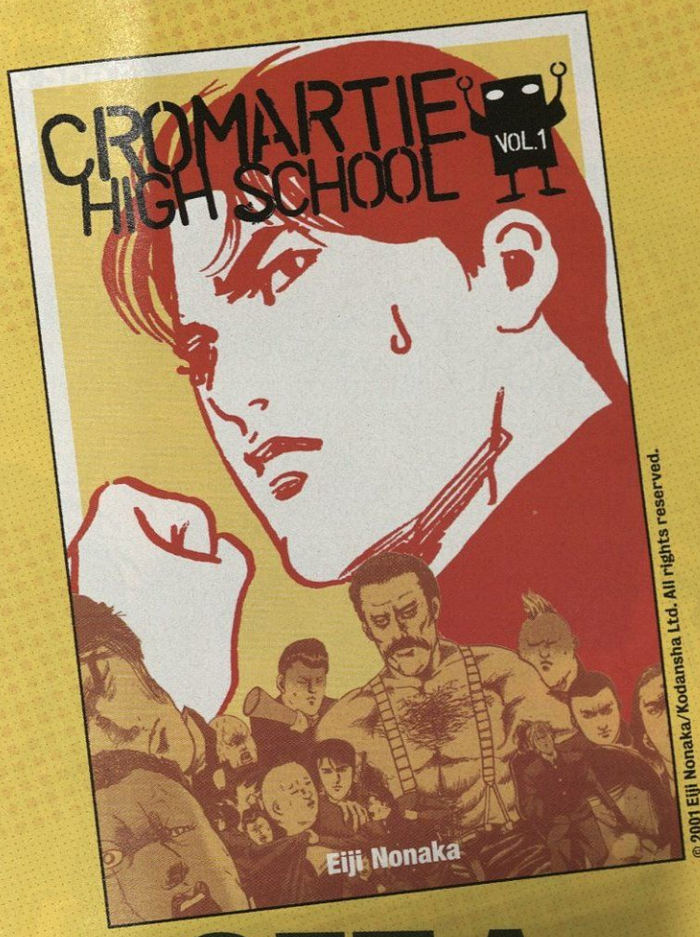
The following Episode Guide may (OK, it does) contain spoilers. It includes summaries of episodes airing on Japanese television from December 10 to January 9. These anime series are generally ahead of the US releases of the same titles, so proceed with caution and watch as the plots thicken.

## TV RATINGS INDEX - JAPAN

| ANIME TITLE | VIEWER RATINGS | | | | | NETWORK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 10/04-10/10 | 10/11-10/17 | 10/18-10/24 | 10/25-10/31 | 11/01-11/07 | |
| *BECK* MONGOLIAN CHOP SQUAD | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 0.9% | TV Tokyo |
| Black Jack | – | 13.2% | 12.3% | 11.4% | 10.4% | Yomiuri TV / Nippon TV |
| BLEACH | 4.3% | 5.0% | 5.1% | 5.7% | 6.6% | TV Tokyo |
| *Bobobo-bo Bo-bobo* | – | – | 2.5% | 2.1% | 2.5% | TV Asahi |
| Bouken Oh Beet—Beet the Vandel Buster | 2.9% | 4.3% | 4.1% | 4.7% | 4.4% | TV Tokyo |
| Desert Punk | – | – | – | – | – | Chubu Nippon |
| FAFNER | 1.4% | 1.1% | 2.0% | 1.2% | 2.2% | TV Tokyo |
| *Final approach* | – | – | – | – | – | TV Kanagawa |
| FUTAKOI | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.5% | 1.1% | 1.1% | TV Tokyo |
| Gankutsuou | 1.1% | 2.4% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.9% | TV Asahi |
| *Genseishin Justirisers* | 5.5% | 4.9% | 5.2% | 5.2% | 4.1% | TV Tokyo |
| Genshiken | – | – | – | – | – | Chiba TV |
| Get Ride! Amdriver | 2.2% | 2.5% | 3.3% | 3.6% | 3.7% | TV Tokyo |
| *Harukanaru Toki no Naka de ~Hachiyo Sho~* | 1.4% | 1.1% | 2.1% | 1.9% | 1.2% | TV Tokyo |
| Kamen Rider Blade | 8.0% | 7.5% | 7.5% | 8.5% | – | TV Asahi |
| Kannazuki no Miko | – | – | – | – | – | Chiba TV |
| Konjiki no Gashbell!! | 7.3% | 7.5% | 7.8% | 8.4% | 7.9% | Fuji TV |
| KURAU Phantom Memory | 1.0% | 1.7% | 1.1% | 1.9% | 0.7% | TV Asahi |
| Maho Shoujo Lyrical Nanoha | – | – | – | – | – | Gifu TV |
| Meitantei Conan ("Case Closed") | 14.3% | – | 12.6% | 14.4% | 12.4% | Yomiuri TV / Nippon TV |
| Mermaid Melody Pichi Pichi Pitchi Pure | 4.9% | 4.5% | 4.8% | 4.4% | 4.3% | TV Aichi / TV Tokyo |
| Mobile Suit Gundam SEED DESTINY | 8.2% | 4.6% | 4.9% | 7.8% | 5.8% | MBS / TBS |
| Monkey Turn V | 2.7% | 1.8% | 2.1% | 1.6% | 3.1% | TV Tokyo |
| MONSTER | 2.2% | 2.2% | 3.0% | 3.4% | 3.2% | Nippon TV |
| MY-HiME | 1.5% | 1.0% | 1.7% | 1.2% | 1.9% | TV Tokyo |
| NARUTO | – | 9.9% | 9.2% | 7.5% | 6.9% | TV Tokyo |
| ONE PIECE | 10.8% | – | – | 10.8% | 11.7% | Fuji TV |
| Otogi Zoushi | 2.0% | – | 2.5% | 2.6% | 2.3% | Nippon TV |
| Pocket Monster Advanced Generation ("Pokémon") | 5.7% | 7.3% | 7.0% | 6.3% | 6.2% | TV Tokyo |
| PRECURE | 7.2% | 6.5% | 6.2% | 8.3% | – | ABC / TV Asahi |
| Rozen Maiden | 1.9% | 1.4% | 2.1% | 0.9% | 2.6% | TBS |
| Samurai Gun | 0.3% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 0.8% | TV Asahi |
| School Rumble | 2.7% | 2.7% | 3.9% | 3.0% | 3.4% | TV Tokyo |
| SD Gundam Force | 1.2% | 2.1% | 2.7% | 2.9% | 3.0% | TV Tokyo |
| Sergeant KERORO | 5.3% | 3.6% | 4.3% | 5.8% | 3.5% | TV Tokyo |
| tactics | 1.2% | 1.2% | 1.4% | 1.5% | 0.9% | TV Tokyo |
| Tsukuyomi –MOON PHASE– | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.6% | TV Tokyo |
| Uta~Kata | – | – | – | – | – | Chiba TV |
| W ~Wish~ | – | – | – | – | – | TV Kanagawa |
| Yakitate!! Japan | – | 6.2% | 6.3% | 7.3% | 7.5% | TV Tokyo |
| Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters GX | 3.5% | 5.3% | 4.1% | 5.4% | 4.9% | TV Tokyo |

The above percentages represent audience ratings based on polling by Video Research Kanto.

# BUY THE MANGA

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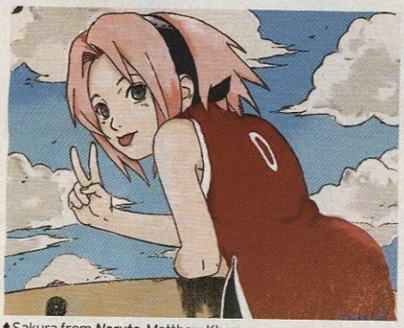
⬆ Claire Leonelli from *Heat Guy J*, Lan Lorady, Age 23, Pennsylvania

⬆ *InuYasha*, Werewolf, La Puente, CA

⬆ *InuYasha*, Infiniti, Age 16

⬅ Risa from *D•N•Angel*, Margima Monaco, Age 14, Chicago, IL

⬅ *Gravitation*, Victoria Ji, Age 12, Quincy, MA



⬆ Sakura from *Naruto*, Matthew Khor, Age 17, Melbourne, Australia

➡ Ray Yzaguirre, Age 16, Highland, CA

⬆ *Naruto*, Sharon Quan, Age 13, Vancouver, BC, Canada

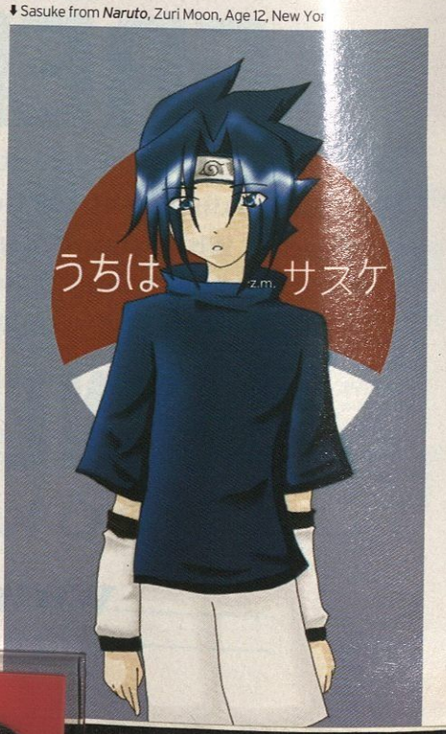
⬆ *Wolf's Rain*, Na-young Kim, Age 15, Spout Spring[illegible]A

⬆ *Eternity X*, Ralph Nixon, Jr., Age 22

⬅ Irvine and Selphie from *Final Fantasy VIII*, Jenn Holton, Age 18, Florida

⬇ *D•N•Angel*, Sabrina Aguilar, Age 23, Claremore, OK

⬇ Sasuke from *Naruto*, Zuri Moon, Age 12, New Yo[illegible]



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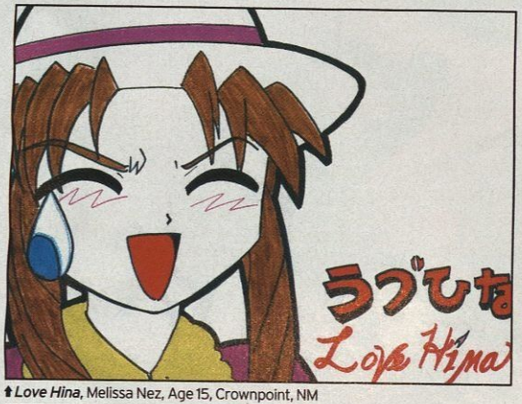
⬆ The Count of Monte Cristo (Edmond Dantes) from ***Gankutsuou***, Tiffanee Niitsu, Age 26, Forest Grove, OR

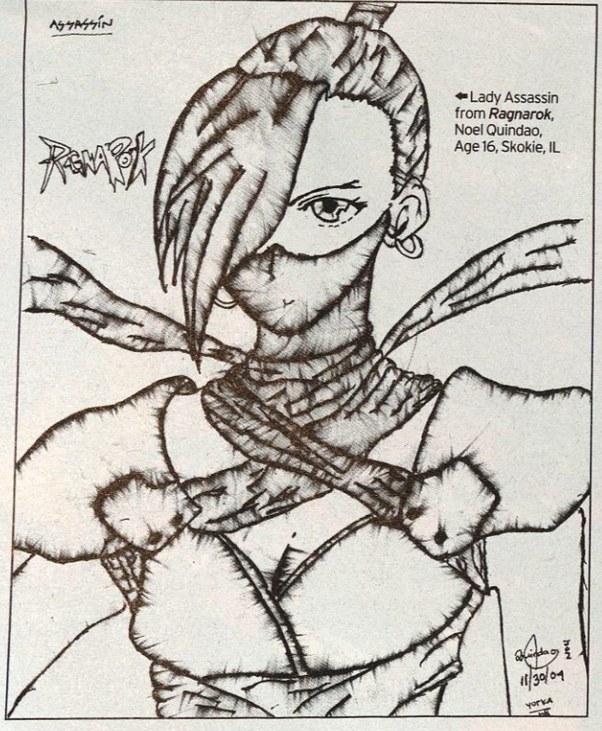
⬆ Rei Dei from ***Trigun***, Nathan Hurley, Age 18, Australia

⬆ Vanilla H from ***Galaxy Angel***, Ryan McGuinness, Age 21, Liverpool, UK




⬆ ***Love Hina***, Melissa Nez, Age 15, Crownpoint, NM

➡ Kana, Alicia R. Thomas, Age 15, Georgia




⬅ Lady Assassin from ***Ragnarok***, Noel Quindao, Age 16, Skokie, IL

⬇ ***Peacemaker Kurogane***, Krystle Haffke, Age 14, Brandford, CT

⬇ ***D•N•Angel***, Jennifer Paul, Age 20, Cologne, MN

the hunters are coming

Fate waits for no one • have no capacity for sadness... None at all.

coming to exterminate the blade children

If anything were to happen to me... give her my regards

you'll cry in my place, won't you?

decided by more than just the death of one person.

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## CLUB DIRECTORY

Temple University Anime Club too far of a drive? Then perhaps one of these fine organizations is a little closer to you. (Want to see your anime club featured here? Send us an e-mail with the subject line "Clubs" to letters@newtype-usa.com.)

### Anime Club: Laramie Chapter (ACLC)
**Web:** www.uwyo.edu/anime
**Contact:** ARajek@uwyo.edu
**Location:** University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY
**Meetings:** Mondays, 7 -10 p.m.; Fridays, 6 - 9 p.m.
**Library:** Yes, open to paying members

### Cal Animage Alpha
**Web:** www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~animage
**Contact:** animage@ocf.berkeley.edu
**Location:** Berkeley, CA
**Meetings:** Mondays, 7 - 10 p.m.
**Library:** Yes, open to paying members
**Other:** Anime Destiny Convention

### Club That Really Likes Anime (CTRL-A)
**Web:** www.ctrl-a.org
**Contact:** CTRL-A@ctrl-a.org
**Location:** University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
**Meetings:** Check website
**Library:** None
**Other:** Anime arts and crafts, mini-convention

### Japanese Animation Club of Orlando (JACO)
**Web:** www.jaco.org
**Contact:** president-jaco@jaco.org
**Location:** Orlando, FL
**Meetings:** 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month, 7 p.m. - midnight
**Library:** Yes, open to paying members
**Other:** JACON

### MCAD Anime
**Web:** www.mcad.edu/anime
**Contact:** continuing_studies@mcad.edu
**Location:** Minneapolis, MN
**Meetings:** Saturdays, 7 p.m. - midnight
**Library:** Yes, student-only checkout (in-library viewing for public)
**Other:** "Schoolgirls and Mobile Suits" Weekend Workshop

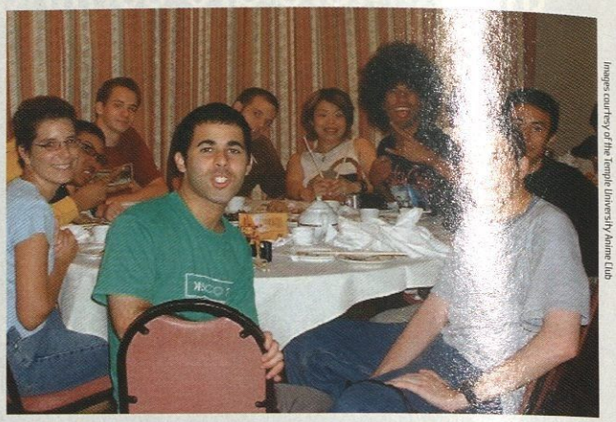
### MIT Anime
**Web:** web.mit.edu/anime/www
**Contact:** anime-inquiry@mit.edu
**Location:** Cambridge, MA
**Meetings:** Fridays, 7 - 10 p.m.
**Library:** Yes, open to paying members
**Other:** MITeiru! Newsletter

### Tucson Anime Screening Society
**Web:** www.tass-anime.com
**Contact:** tass@tass.org
**Location:** Tucson, AZ
**Meetings:** Various Saturdays, 1 - 9 p.m.
**Library:** None
**Other:** Anime marathons

### Washington State University Anime Club
**Web:** www.wsu.edu/~anime
**Contact:** splincoln@wsu.edu
**Location:** Pullman, WA
**Meetings:** Wednesdays, 7 - 10 p.m.
**Library:** Yes
**Other:** Extensive participation in the convention scene

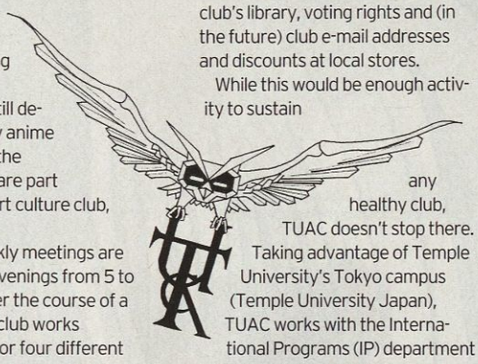
ANIME CLUB SPOTLIGHT

# Temple University Anime Club



Images courtesy of the Temple University Anime Club

**THE SOUNDS OF** taiko drums boom through the air while you sit with your bento box under a tree as cherry blossom petals fall around you. No, this isn't a festival in Japan; this is Japan Fest, a yearly event held by the Temple University Anime Club (TUAC). Located in Philadelphia, TUAC prides itself on hosting these kinds of events while still delivering weekly anime screenings to the masses. They are part anime club, part culture club, and all fun.



TUAC's weekly meetings are on Thursday evenings from 5 to 9 p.m., and over the course of a semester, the club works through three or four different series. The first hour of the meetings consists of either a random showing or a special event. In their obsession to promote Japanese culture, the special events (about five per semester) feature a huge range of Japanese culture-based guests. In the past they've hosted talks on anything from kendo (martial arts) and ikebana (the Japanese art of flower arrangement) to a World War II historian's analysis of Studio Ghibli's ***Grave of the Fireflies***. The meetings are open to everyone, but for a small fee ($6/semester or $10 for the year), you can become an official member, granting you access to the club's library, voting rights and (in the future) club e-mail addresses and discounts at local stores.

While this would be enough activity to sustain any healthy club, TUAC doesn't stop there. Taking advantage of Temple University's Tokyo campus (Temple University Japan), TUAC works with the International Programs (IP) department to set up communication with Japanese students who will be coming over to the US as part of their exchange program.

As a result of TUAC's passion for Japanese culture, the Japan Society of Greater Philadelphia approached them a few years ago to get involved in the city's Cherry Blossom Festival. Since then, TUAC, along with Temple University's IP department and TUJ, holds a Japan Fest during (or close to) the city's Cherry Blossom Festival. Some of the events from years past have included anime screenings at the public libraries, performances by taiko drummers on campus and in the city, and a sushi and bento catering service.

Those of you who are too far from Philadelphia to check out these and other events can still take advantage of their website. Along with a forum and news section, the site has interesting features like an interactive hiragana quiz, an extensive photo and sketch gallery, and a book co-op where students can buy, sell and request all sorts of books.

### TEMPLE UNIVERSITY ANIME CLUB

**Web:** www.temple-anime.org/
**Contact:** On website
**Location:** Philadelphia, PA
**Anime Shown:** Varied
**Size:** 40-100
**Meetings:** Thursdays from 5 - 9 p.m.
**Library:** Yes
**Sub or Dub:** Sub
**Other:** Japan Fest

# Otaku Sensei Says

**OUR RESIDENT CLUB EXPERT,** Nicolas Duarte, has another identity—Otaku Sensei! Each month he uses his psychic ninja e-mail skills to answer questions from fans across the country who want to start their own anime club, run an existing club more efficiently, or find out more about club culture. Write to him at otaku_sensei_says@hotmail.com with your queries.

Drew-chan from Otaku Ai anime club in Florida writes with two problems she's facing with new members in her club. First: **"Most of our members are new to the anime scene and aren't really into subtitles. I don't feel that they are getting what they truly should out of our meetings."**

If one thing is certain in the sub vs. dub argument, it's that not everyone likes their anime the same way. Regardless of how you personally feel about the issue, if you're interested in doing what's best for the membership of your club, you'll let the members decide. Hold a quick vote before starting a new show. Or run a special "subtitled" night where you only screen subbed anime and let everyone know about it beforehand. Either way, your meetings should be about fostering a love of anime and not quibbling over sub vs. dub.

Her second problem: **"I've been into anime for a little over seven years. I love both the classics and the new stuff. It makes me mad when members don't want to watch *Evangelion* because the animation isn't as good! How can I interest them in some of the older, more influential anime titles?"**

Liking the classics is subjective. Sometimes anime doesn't age well—that's really nothing new for animation, as modern techniques replace the old and generally look better. You could apply that to any visual medium—movies, TV and even American cartoons. Just because something was a classic way back when doesn't mean that today's audience will appreciate it as much.

What I would suggest is to try another themed screening night, maybe call it "Anime Classics Night," or "Anime Fan/Otaku 101," where people can experience classic anime. Maybe plan it so you show the evolution of a genre, from ***Star Blazers*** to ***Gundam*** to ***Macross*** to ***Evangelion*** to something more recent. But it doesn't have to be interstellar battles with giant robots; you can do this with just about any genre. If you can't add an extra night, you may just want to add one or two episodes of classic anime to the end of your normal meeting, allowing people to stay and check it out or leave if they're not interested. They're already there, so why not stay a little longer? Make sure to do what the majority wants. Clubs are no fun if a dictator rules them, so let the members decide what they do. If they see that their president loves something enough to add more events, curiosity will drive them to come.

### RESOURCES OF THE MONTH

If you're looking for informa[illegible] about Japanese culture, check out [illegible] following websites:

» www.animeinfo.org/animeu.html - A web-based anime "university" that offers several articles about the history of anime and its cultural roots
» www.japan-guide.com - Has lots of information about Japan and its culture
» www.koyagi.com/teachers.html - The "teachers guide" to Gilles Poitras' ***The Anime Companion***

If you're interested in putting together special screenings of classic anime, start by looking at a list of classic shows, grouped alphabetically:
» anime.mikomi.org/by-key/Classic/

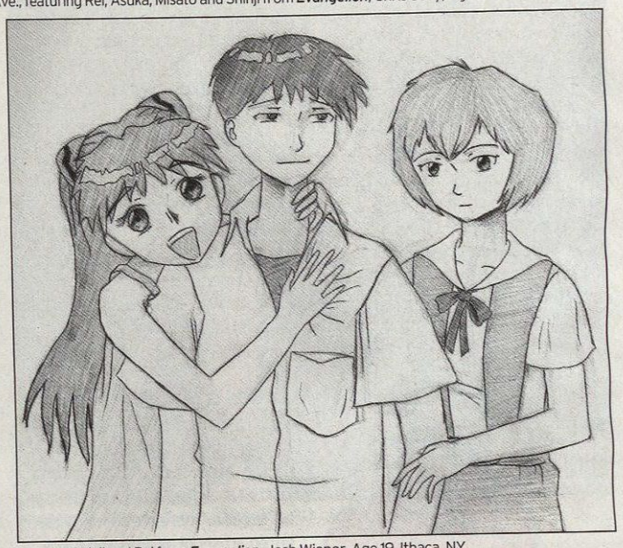
text by NICOLAS DUARTE

⬆Edward Elric from ***Fullmetal Alchemist***, Rodney Fernandes, Age 37, Boise, ID

⬆Kimishima from ***s-CRY-ed***, Amanda "Asuka" Wenger, Age 15, Easton, CT

⬆EVA 429 on Anno Ave., featuring Rei, Asuka, Misato and Shinji from ***Evangelion***, Chris Seay, Age 29, Warrenton, VA

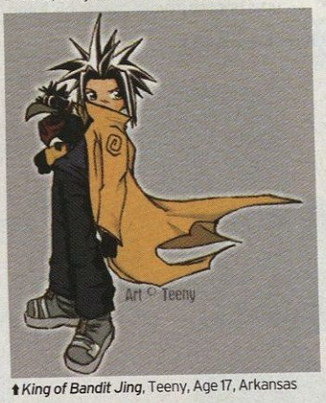
⬆Rei from ***Evangelion***, Kristian Delosangeles, Age 21, Kalamazoo, MI



⬆Asuka, Shinji and Rei from ***Evangelion***, Josh Wiener, Age 19, Ithaca, NY

⬆Tidus and Yuna from ***Final Fantasy X***, Meiran Chang, Age 17, Clarkston, GA

⬆Aerith from ***Final Fantasy VII***, Jolan Chien-Szegedy, Age 18, Davis, CA



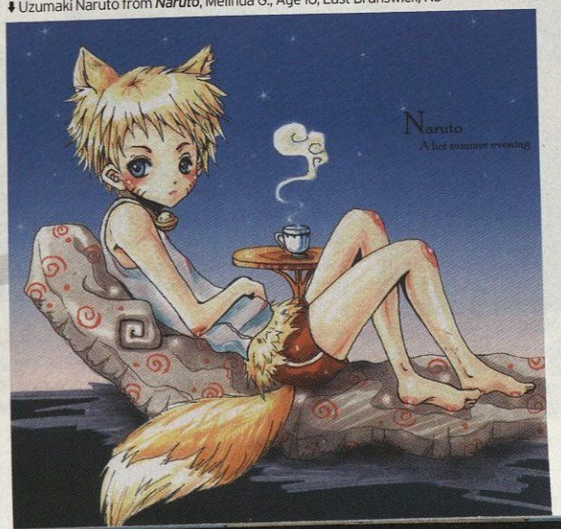

⬆***King of Bandit Jing***, Teeny, Age 17, Arkansas

⬆Subaru and Tsukasa from ***.hack//SIGN***, Ariana "Vahn" Tolano, Age 15, Florida

⬇KOS-MOS (and Shion from ***Xenosaga***, Tiva Emerson (aka sh... Kumeii00), Age 16, Orlando, FL

F•MALLET
KP-X SD

⬇Uzumaki Naruto from ***Naruto***, Melinda G., Age 16, East Brunswick, NJ




⬇Sakura from ***Cardcaptors***, Amy aka Sakura02, Miami, FL

# Letters

## Big in '05

*In our January issue, we used our Thousand Words page to discuss the anime we're excited about in 2005. We asked you to tell us what you thought the next big anime was gonna be. Here's a sampling of what you had to say:*

I do realize that the titles you guys listed are your opinions; however, you asked for thoughts, so here goes. Obviously ***Fullmetal Alchemist*** is this year's 800-pound gorilla, so no real need to mention much on that. Chris was dead-on with his assessment of ***Midori Days***; this is a great show. And you mention ***Burst Angel***, but you don't mention ***Scrapped Princess***? Let's give some more love to ***Scrapped Princess***—it's sure to be one of the better titles released in 2005.

*Zachary Boucher • White Horse Beach, MA*

*Well, we couldn't mention all the titles we were looking forward to. But we have no idea how we missed* **Scrapped Princess**. *Check out the feature on page 30 for all your Pacifica Cassul needs.*

I've really been enjoying the ***Negima!*** manga. When I heard that an anime series was coming out, I jumped for joy! (It was in the middle of study hall, so I got a stern look from the teacher, but I didn't care!) I hope the ***Negima!*** anime will come to the US in 2005!

*Ashley Fischbaum • Manassas, VA*

I love ***Kaleido Star***, so I'm looking forward to ***New Wings*** and the ***Kaleido Star 2*** OVA that's coming out in Japan (you talked about it in your January issue). Apart from that, it's ***Ah! My Goddess***, ***Elfen Lied*** and ***MADLAX***, brutha.

*Peter Fitzsimmons • Topeka, KS*

➡ InuYasha from ***InuYasha***, Lauren Lamp, Age 14, Virginia

## Voices of America

Your magazine is the best out there. I have not missed an issue since I picked up my first one in September 2003. I like looking through the fan art section. There are so many talented artists of all ages and mediums printed in your magazine. Keep up the great art, everyone. My question is: When are we going to see a section on our voice actors and actresses? I would really like to get more information on them. Please start a section all about American voice actors and actresses.

*Derek Schuster • Oshkosh, WI*

*Thanks for the kind words, Derek. As for adding more coverage about American voice actors, we've been adding it where we can over the last several months with coverage on the dubs of* **Gantz** *and* **Fullmetal Alchemist**. *Check out this month's feature on* **Scrapped Princess** *for some insight into that show's English production. What do you guys think of what we've done so far? Do you want to see us do more dub coverage? If so, write in and express your dub love!*

⬇ Canti from ***FLCL***, Michael Newcomer, Age 18, San Bernardino, CA

## Samurai family tree

I've noticed that you've published at least two articles on ***Peacemaker Kurogane***, and I was wondering why there's never any mention in them about the similarities between it and ***Rurouni Kenshin***. I mean, as far as I've seen, they're pretty close. Both are about the Shinsengumi, both have characters based on people in the real Shinsengumi (they actually both have Sanosuke), both have tall male characters who smoke (I love Saito!), and BOTH OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS HAVE RED HAIR! GAH!

*Sarah Williams • Germantown, MD*

*Similarities abound, but that's because their fictional stories happen within a real history. Kenshin and Tetsunosuke are very different characters, though. It's not uncommon to see multiple anime derived from the same Japanese legends or history—witness* **Dragon Ball** *and* **Saiyuki**, *both of which are (loosely) based on the* **Journey to the West** *story.*

## More "Gateway" tales

My "Gateway Anime" was ***Sailor Moon***, about seven years ago. Since then, I have been an absolute otaku-converting machine. Thanks to me and my non-stop rambling, half of my town loves anime. I used to always hit people with my personal favorite title, ***Evangelion***. It usually worked perfectly, but in some cases it just wasn't the way to go. Now I start the girls off with ***D•N•Angel*** or ***Pretear*** and the guys with ***Evangelion*** or ***Gundam Wing***. I even managed to get my 60-year-old dad to sit through ***Armitage III: Polymatrix***. That takes talent.

*Drew Nixon • Port St.Joe, FL*

*Excellent work. Your next step—getting your great great great grandmother totally hooked on* **Gravitation**.

⬆ Ed and Al from ***Fullmetal Alchemist***, Hiruka, Age 22, Albuquerque, NM

## Cosplay Confusion

This year at the Cosplay Contest in Wellington i want to go as Misha from pita ten but my sister is going to enter too but hasnt decided who as but now shes saying shes going to bye pita ten but i told her she couldn't so she ask me if she could read it and i said no, but now i thing shes going to read it without my permission and maybe she wants to dress up as Misha or Shia because there dresses are so frilly and shes trying to watch my anime (i have more than 25 dvds) and i dont know what to do im so confused...

*Pura Pura • via the World Wide Global InterWeb*

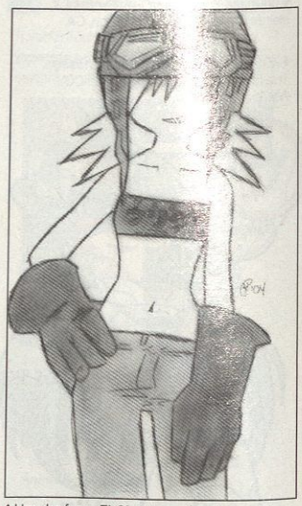
*Hmm, wait. You said* you're *confused?*

## Is it OK to like girly anime?

I'm a 15-year-old high school student in California, and I've always enjoyed all types of anime. A while ago at my school, I heard two girls talking about ***Azumanga Daioh***, so I walked toward them and told them I like it too. When I said that, they looked at me kinda strangely and started to shout rude comments like, "You're a boy, that kind of anime isn't for you!" and stuff like that. I do enjoy action anime, but I also like romantic comedy anime. I never really thought it was "girlish," though. Is that wrong?

*Steven T... Riverside, CA*

*Of course it's not wrong. Think about it: Guys like cute girls. Cute girls can be found in* **Azumanga Daioh**. *So if X + Y equals Z...carry the two...square-root of...(muttering)...that means*



⬆ Haruko from ***FLCL***, Myranda Hall, Age 14, Benton, KY

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⬆Marino from *ANGEL/DUST neo*, Age 16, Samantha aka Annie, Yonkers, NY

⬆Nata from *Gamerz Heaven*, Shawa, Meriden, CT

⬆Axl from *Mega Man X*, Anne Kachelhoffer, Age 23, Mansfield, TX

*that guys can like* **Azumanga** *too. Don't worry about what those girls said. But if you start wearing your Chiyo-chan cosplay to school, you've taken things way too far.*

## Make with the bling

Have you ever wondered where the slang term "bling" came from? It actually came from the bell-chime sound effect that coincides with a sun gleam off a mecha's armor. Later, the sound effect would be paired with the gleam from a magical girl's jewelry after her transformation. It was used so many times that it became synonymous with new shiny clean metal objects and finally gold jewelry. Hence it's that anime bell-chime effect "bling" that would come to mean money years later. I think it's amazing how our different cultures influence each other, and thought I would share that.

*Tamajain Alexander • Pasadena, CA*

*Hmm, are you just guessing there is a connection, or are you sure this is how it all went down? We question the soundness of your theory...*

## Good and short, please

Some people think that if a show is good, they should make more, either a sequel or more episodes or at least more products using the show's name. There are plenty of reasons why they shouldn't, though. Have you heard of something called "too much of a good thing"? You know, where having more of a show can actually make it less popular, less interesting and more of a pain in the @$$. Some really crazy anime fans out there will do anything to get what they want. If they can't get more of that particular anime... they'll explode! But please, don't make so much. I mean come on...how many ***Dragon Balls*** or ***Pokémons*** are there gonna be? Once a show gets past 50 or 100 episodes, I just get sick of it. Why couldn't all of that have been boiled down in a more concise 25? Please. All I ask is to please make the anime good and make it short!

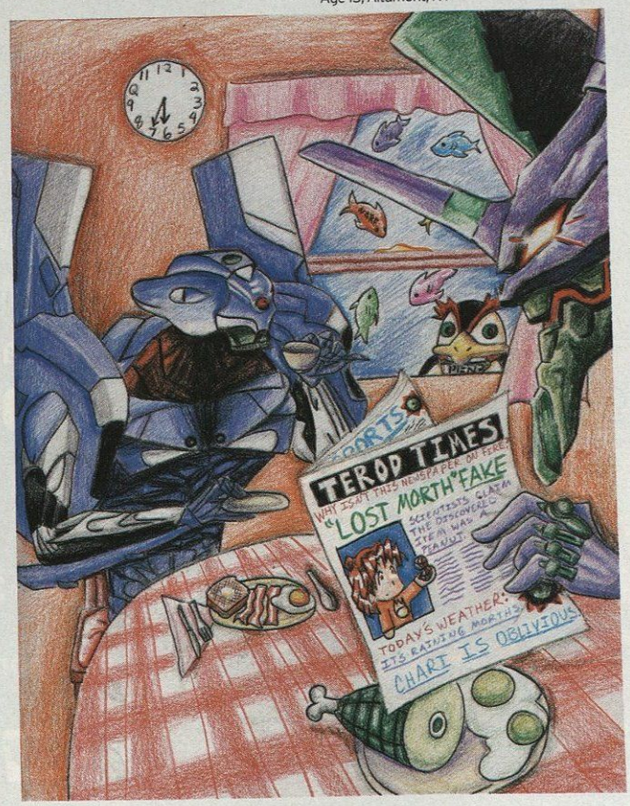
*MaKiJade • New York, NY*

⬅Hinata from *Ikki Tousen*, Jevon Rodgers, Age 21, Great Falls, MT

⬇*Evangelion*, Lee Anna Fitzgerald, Age 15, Altamont, NY

*We're sure everyone reading this who wants more of* **Cowboy Bebop** *or* **Trigun** *or* **FLCL** *has just screamed a collective "NOOOOOO!" to your letter (though those shows had pretty clear endings). And even if you think a series is too long, others will eat it up—even the slower bits. It is a good point though, that sometimes more doesn't automatically mean better. We'll just turn it to our readers—do you have any shows you wish they'd make at least a few more episodes of?*

⬆Athrun Zala from ***Gundam SEED***, zaza, Age 21, Los Angeles, CA




## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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- You must give us your complete address (but we'll identify you only by city & state).
- We reserve the right to edit letters for length, clarity and taste.

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- Include your name, your age, title of anime portrayed, where you are from and e-mail or home address.

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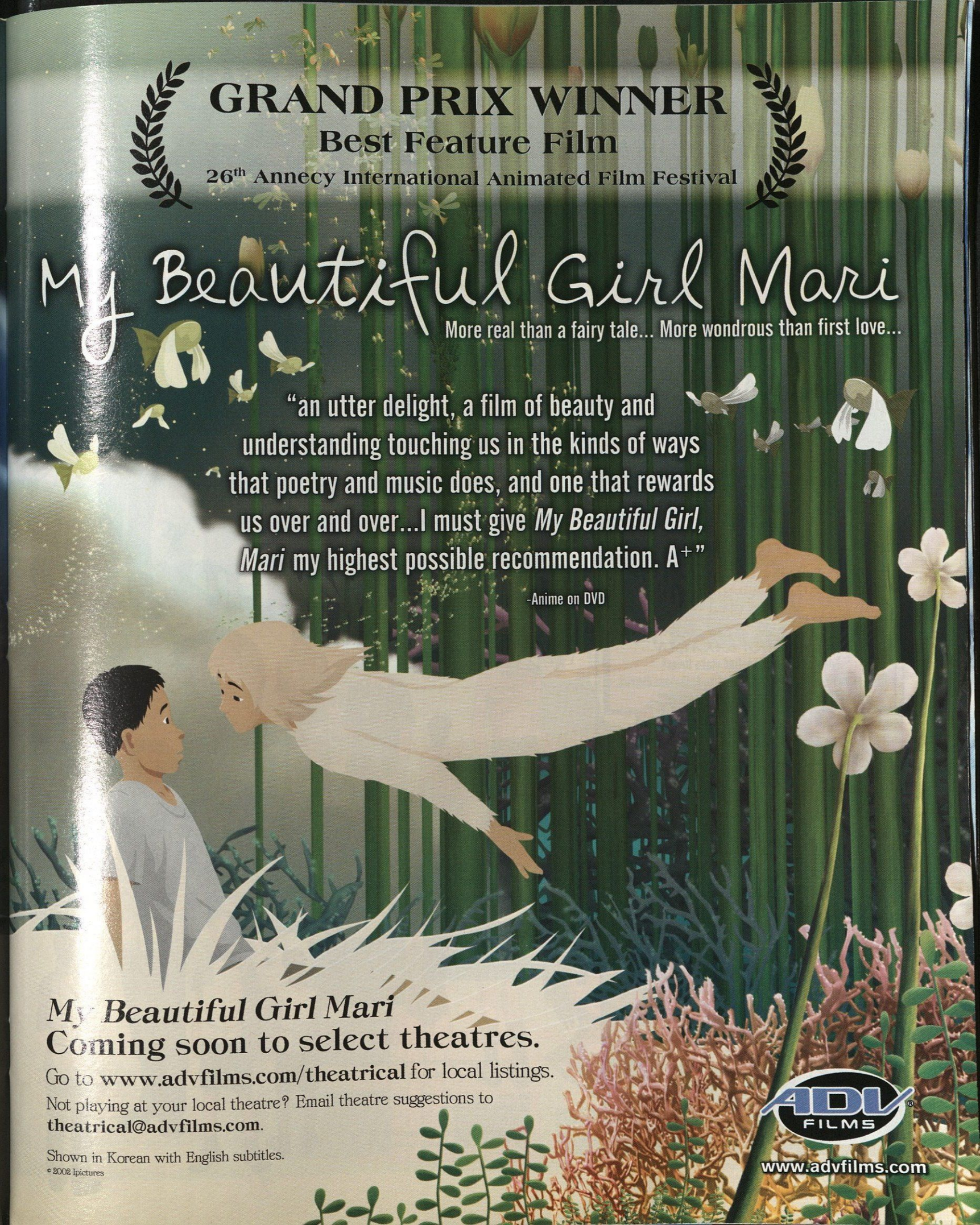
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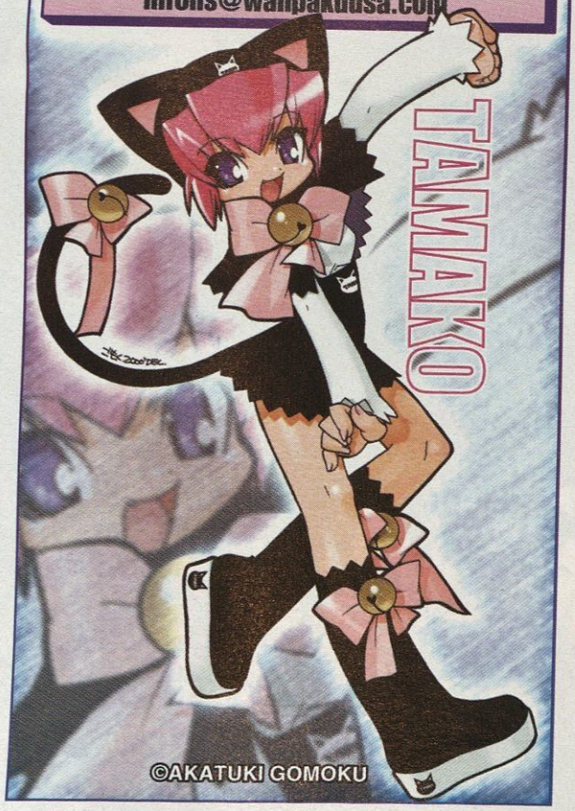
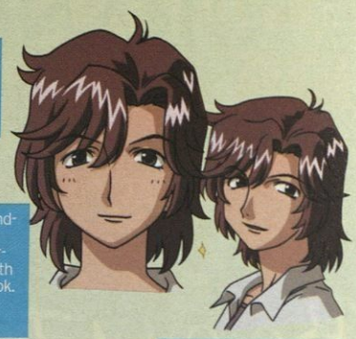




# THE OFFICIAL ART OF PLEASE TWINS!

⬅ Kousei looks very cool and athletic. He's cute as long as he keeps his mouth shut.

➡ Kousei's handsome, but he's constantly staring at Maiku with this dreamy look. Sort of creepy, actually...

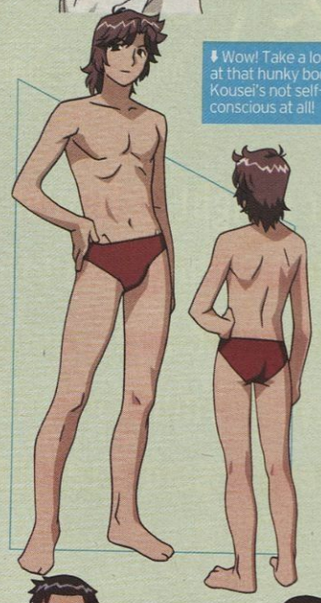


**Kou[illegible] Shimazaki**

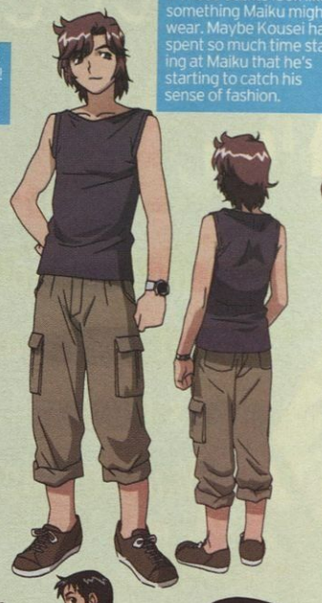
All th[illegible] think that Maiku and Kousei ar[illegible] ottest guys in the tenth grade [illegible]ei always seems to be comin[illegible] Maiku, but is he serious? No on[illegible]s. It could be he just enjoys gi[illegible]utaba and Akina something [illegible]p about. He's probably the onl[illegible]on the standoffish Maiku could re[illegible]all a friend.

VOICE [illegible]OR

Keni[illegible] Suzumura

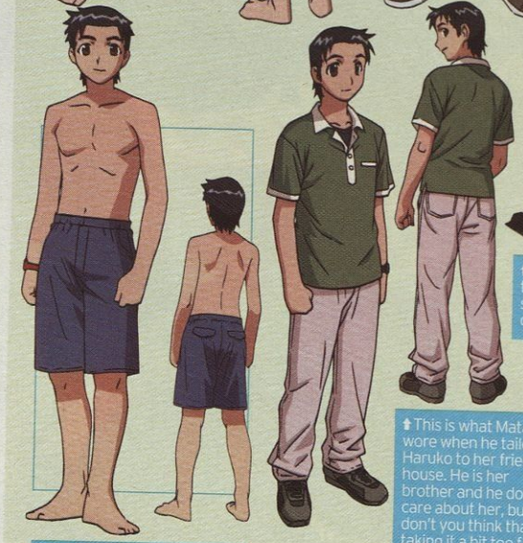


⬇ Wow! Take a look at that hunky body! Kousei's not self-conscious at all!

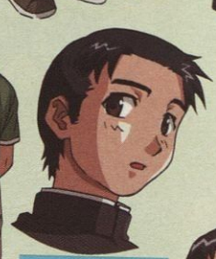


⬇ These outfits look like something Maiku might wear. Maybe Kousei has spent so much time staring at Maiku that he's starting to catch his sense of fashion.

⬇ Kousei sometimes makes up misleading stories that cause all sorts of trouble for Maiku. Is he happy just being Maiku's friend, or does he want something more?



⬆ What can we say? Matagu's swimsuit may be pretty dull, but could you see him in Kousei's skimpy swimsuit? Didn't think so...



**Matagu Shidou**

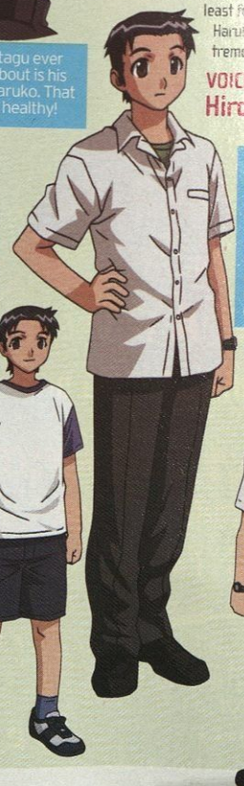
Matagu is Haruk[illegible]s big brother and Kei Kusanagi's [illegible]ssmate. He's never had a girlfriend[illegible] and he's pretty lonely and desp[illegible]e. But he gets to go to school with [illegible]dear sister Haruko every do[illegible]and that makes him the happies[illegible]on earth...at least fo[illegible]hile. His love for Haruk[illegible]ms a bit extreme[illegible]sally.

VOICE [illegible]OR

Hiroa[illegible] Miura

⬆ All Matagu ever thinks about is his sister Haruko. That can't be healthy!

⬆ This is what Matagu wore when he tailed Haruko to her friend's house. He is her brother and he does care about her, but don't you think that's taking it a bit too far?



⬅ [illegible]robably the most [illegible]ve thing a[illegible] Matagu is his lack [illegible]distinguishing feat[illegible]e. He's as ordinar[illegible]ney come. But [illegible]you see him in action, you'll realize t[illegible]s nothing ordinary about him.

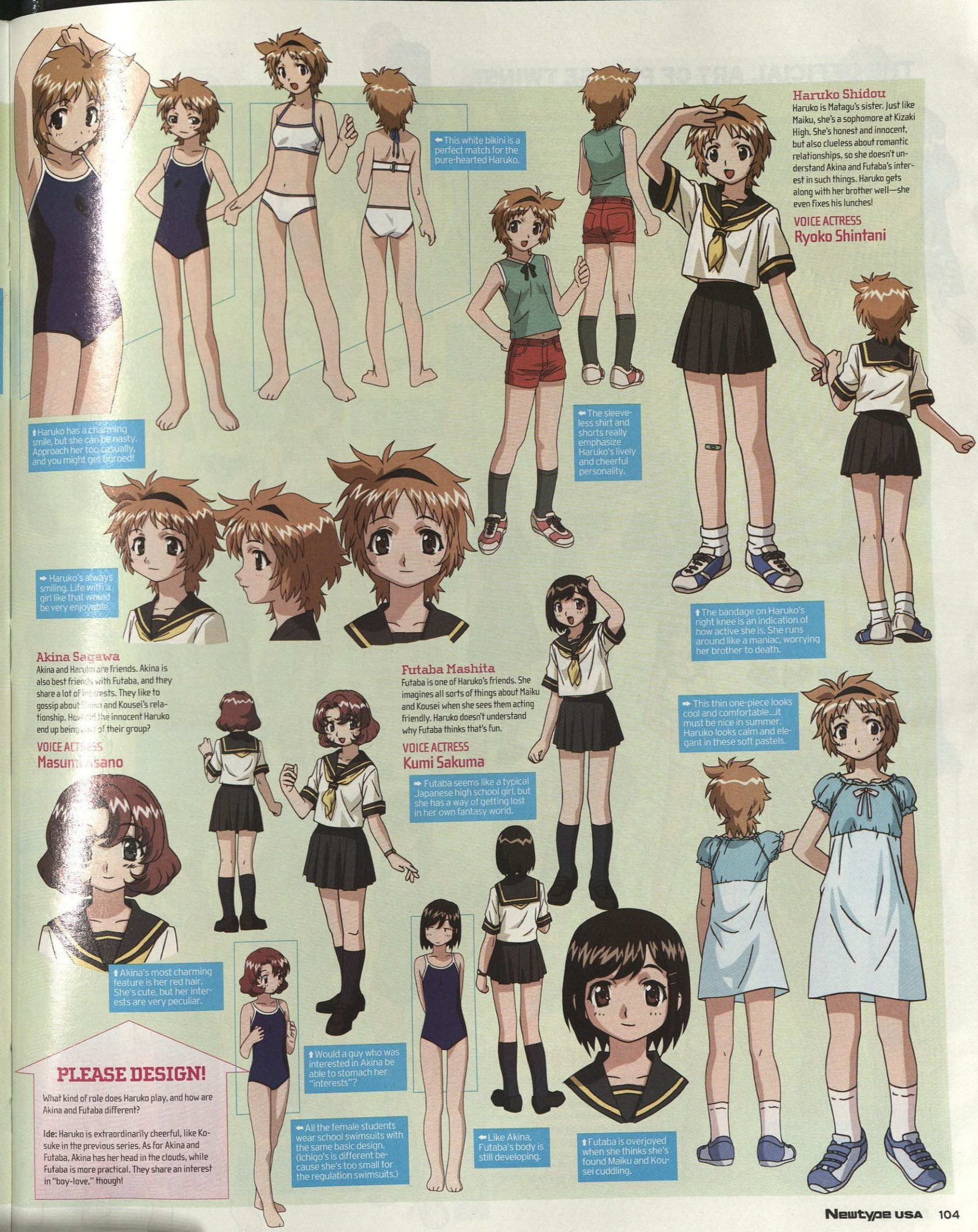
➡ Matagu's outfits are always simple...but not in a good way. Nobody fits the phrase "average Joe" better than this guy.

## PLEASE DESIGN!

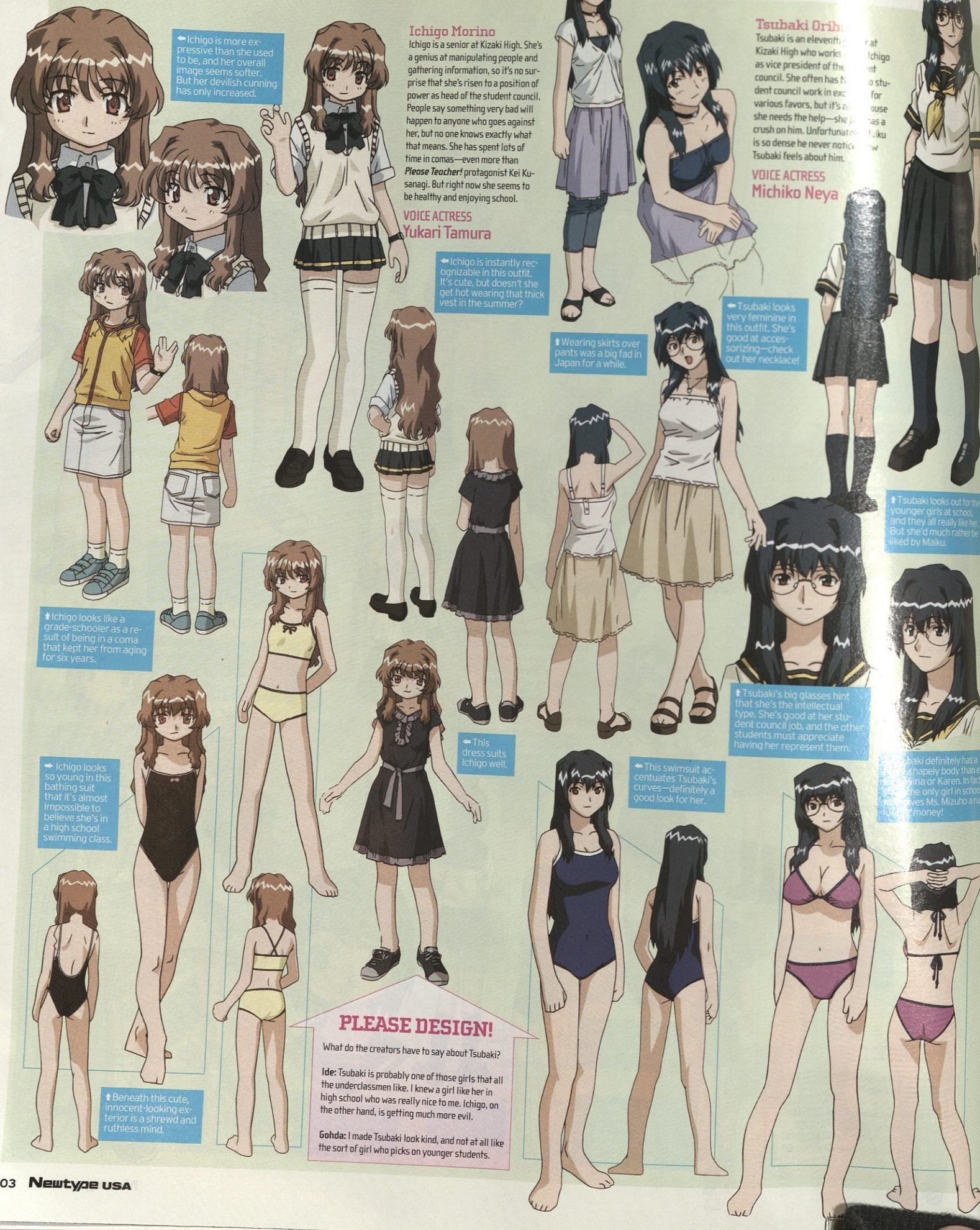
How did Matagu change from the previous *Please Teacher!* series? Did he mature at all?

**Ide:** Nope. He didn't really change at all, and he'll just stay that way forever.

**Gohda:** Matagu turned into the comic relief, but when I drew him, at least I made him *look* serious.


Haruko Shidou
Haruko is Matagu's sister. Just like Maiku, she's a sophomore at Kizaki High. She's honest and innocent, but also clueless about romantic relationships, so she doesn't understand Akina and Futaba's interest in such things. Haruko gets along with her brother well—she even fixes his lunches!
VOICE ACTRESS
Ryoko Shintani
This white bikini is a perfect match for the pure-hearted Haruko.
Haruko has a charming smile, but she can be nasty. Approach her too casually, and you might get burned!
The sleeveless shirt and shorts really emphasize Haruko's lively and cheerful personality.
Haruko's always smiling. Life with a girl like that would be very enjoyable.
The bandage on Haruko's right knee is an indication of how active she is. She runs around like a maniac, worrying her brother to death.
Akina Sagawa
Akina and Haruko are friends. Akina is also best friends with Futaba, and they share a lot of interests. They like to gossip about Haruko and Kousei's relationship. How did the innocent Haruko end up being part of their group?
VOICE ACTRESS
Masumi Asano
Futaba Mashita
Futaba is one of Haruko's friends. She imagines all sorts of things about Maiku and Kousei when she sees them acting friendly. Haruko doesn't understand why Futaba thinks that's fun.
VOICE ACTRESS
Kumi Sakuma
Futaba seems like a typical Japanese high school girl, but she has a way of getting lost in her own fantasy world.
This thin one-piece looks cool and comfortable...it must be nice in summer. Haruko looks calm and elegant in these soft pastels.
Akina's most charming feature is her red hair. She's cute, but her interests are very peculiar.
Would a guy who was interested in Akina be able to stomach her "interests"?
All the female students wear school swimsuits with the same basic design. (Ichigo's is different because she's too small for the regulation swimsuits.)
Like Akina, Futaba's body is still developing.
Futaba is overjoyed when she thinks she's found Maiku and Kousei cuddling.
PLEASE DESIGN!
What kind of role does Haruko play, and how are Akina and Futaba different?
Ide: Haruko is extraordinarily cheerful, like Kosuke in the previous series. As for Akina and Futaba, Akina has her head in the clouds, while Futaba is more practical. They share an interest in "boy-love," though!

# THE OFFICIAL ART OF PLEASE TWINS!



### Ichigo Morino

Ichigo is a senior at Kizaki High. She's a genius at manipulating people and gathering information, so it's no surprise that she's risen to a position of power as head of the student council. People say something very bad will happen to anyone who goes against her, but no one knows exactly what that means. She has spent lots of time in comas—even more than ***Please Teacher!*** protagonist Kei Kusanagi. But right now she seems to be healthy and enjoying school.

VOICE ACTRESS
**Yukari Tamura**

### Tsubaki Orih

Tsubaki is an eleventh [illegible] at Kizaki High who works [illegible] Ichigo as vice president of the [illegible]nt council. She often has [illegible]o student council work in exc[illegible] for various favors, but it's o[illegible]ause she needs the help—she j[illegible]as a crush on him. Unfortunate[illegible]iku is so dense he never notic[illegible]ow Tsubaki feels about him.

VOICE ACTRESS
**Michiko Neya**

⬅ Ichigo is more expressive than she used to be, and her overall image seems softer. But her devilish cunning has only increased.

⬅ Ichigo is instantly recognizable in this outfit. It's cute, but doesn't she get hot wearing that thick vest in the summer?

⬆ Wearing skirts over pants was a big fad in Japan for a while.

⬅ Tsubaki looks very feminine in this outfit. She's good at accessorizing—check out her necklace!

⬆ Tsubaki looks out for the younger girls at school, and they all really like her. But she'd much rather be liked by Maiku.

⬆ Ichigo looks like a grade-schooler as a result of being in a coma that kept her from aging for six years.

➡ Ichigo looks so young in this bathing suit that it's almost impossible to believe she's in a high school swimming class.

⬅ This dress suits Ichigo well.

⬅ This swimsuit accentuates Tsubaki's curves—definitely a good look for her.

⬆ Tsubaki's big glasses hint that she's the intellectual type. She's good at her student council job, and the other students must appreciate having her represent them.

⬆ Beneath this cute, innocent-looking exterior is a shrewd and ruthless mind.

[illegible]baki definitely has a [illegible]shapely body than e[illegible]ina or Karen. In fac[illegible]the only girl in schoo[illegible]ives Ms. Mizuho a ru[illegible]money!

## PLEASE DESIGN!

What do the creators have to say about Tsubaki?

**Ide:** Tsubaki is probably one of those girls that all the underclassmen like. I knew a girl like her in high school who was really nice to me. Ichigo, on the other hand, is getting much more evil.

**Gohda:** I made Tsubaki look kind, and not at all like the sort of girl who picks on younger students.

## Mizuho Kazami

Mizuho teaches Japanese at Kizaki High, the school Maiku and the girls attend. She's part human and part alien. She was sent to Earth as an observer by order of the Galaxy Federation, and she met and eventually married Kei. She's a very compassionate teacher who always looks after Maiku and the other students, but she can be truly dense. Her favorite snack is Pochy, and she always has some on-hand.

VOICE ACTRESS
**Kikuko Inoue**

➡ Mizuho is so beautiful and kind that the male students go crazy over her, but everyone knows she's married to Kei, so no one makes any serious moves on her.

⬅ This tunic reveals less skin, but she looks great in black!

⬆ A skimpy bikini is Mizuho's swimsuit of choice. But watch out, guys. Enjoy the view too much and incur the wrath of her husband!

⬅ Mizuho normally teaches Japanese, but she sometimes supervises P.E., too.

## Kei Kusanagi

Kei is a senior at Kizaki High. He used to suffer from a mysterious illness that made him go into a coma-like state whenever he was stressed out or depressed, but Mizuho saved him. She knew it was against regulations, and she paid the price by being forced to leave Earth. Kei's memories of her were erased at that point, but he later regained his lost memories, and Mizuho managed to return to Earth. Now things are back to normal for them—student and teacher at school and a happily married couple at home.

VOICE ACTOR
**Soichiro Hoshi**

➡ Kei is 20 years old, but he looks much younger because he didn't age during his comas. If it hadn't been for Mizuho, he could have been in a coma for the rest of his life.

⬅ Even though Kei doesn't fall into comas anymore, he still hasn't grown much. But that doesn't bother Mizuho because she likes smaller men.

⬆ Kei looks a little more mature these days, unlike Matagu, who's still as childish as ever. Kei's gone through some tough times.

➡ Mizuho looks very different when she takes her glasses off and lets her hair down, more like a beautiful girl-next-door type.

⬆ **HER EXPRESSIONS**
Mizuho can be ditzy, but she's very serious about taking care of her students.

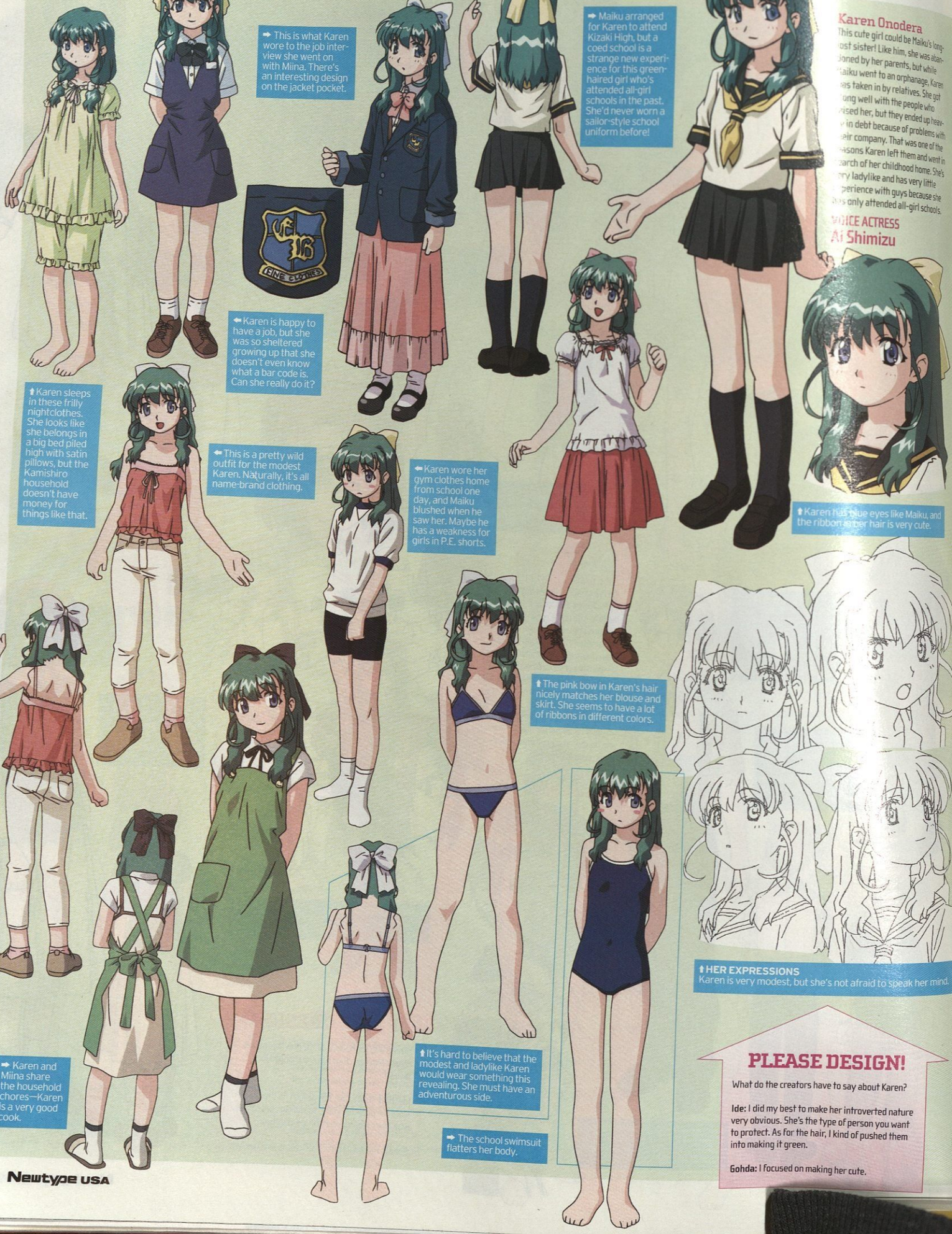
## PLEASE DESIGN!

Mizuho was the heroine of the previous series *Please Teacher!*. How has she changed for *Twins!?*

**Ide:** More than a year has passed [in the show] since the previous story, so she appears calmer now. She's less naïve and more gracious.

**Gohda:** I eased up on her strictness as a teacher.

# THE OFFIC ART OF PLEASE TWINS!



➡ This is what Karen wore to the job interview she went on with Miina. There's an interesting design on the jacket pocket.

➡ Maiku arranged for Karen to attend Kizaki High, but a coed school is a strange new experience for this green-haired girl who's attended all-girl schools in the past. She'd never worn a sailor-style school uniform before!

**Karen Onodera**
This cute girl could be Maiku's long-lost sister! Like him, she was abandoned by her parents, but while Maiku went to an orphanage, Karen was taken in by relatives. She got along well with the people who raised her, but they ended up heavily in debt because of problems with their company. That was one of the reasons Karen left them and went in search of her childhood home. She's very ladylike and has very little experience with guys because she has only attended all-girl schools.

VOICE ACTRESS
Ai Shimizu

⬅ Karen is happy to have a job, but she was so sheltered growing up that she doesn't even know what a bar code is. Can she really do it?

⬆ Karen sleeps in these frilly nightclothes. She looks like she belongs in a big bed piled high with satin pillows, but the Kamishiro household doesn't have money for things like that.

⬅ This is a pretty wild outfit for the modest Karen. Naturally, it's all name-brand clothing.

⬅ Karen wore her gym clothes home from school one day, and Maiku blushed when he saw her. Maybe he has a weakness for girls in P.E. shorts.

⬆ Karen has blue eyes like Maiku, and the ribbon in her hair is very cute.

⬆ The pink bow in Karen's hair nicely matches her blouse and skirt. She seems to have a lot of ribbons in different colors.

⬆ **HER EXPRESSIONS**
Karen is very modest, but she's not afraid to speak her mind.

➡ Karen and Miina share the household chores—Karen is a very good cook.

⬆ It's hard to believe that the modest and ladylike Karen would wear something this revealing. She must have an adventurous side.

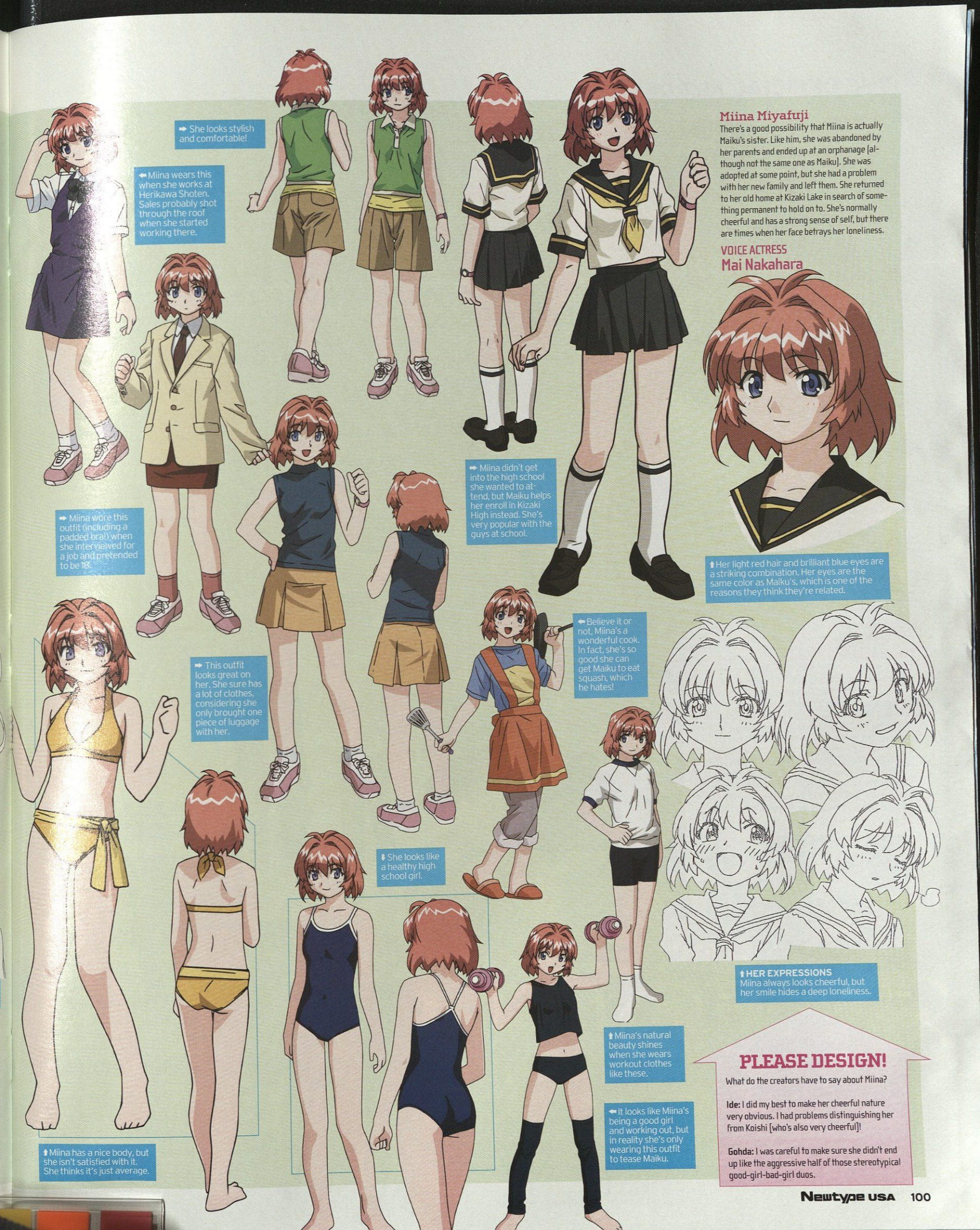
➡ The school swimsuit flatters her body.

## PLEASE DESIGN!

What do the creators have to say about Karen?

**Ide:** I did my best to make her introverted nature very obvious. She's the type of person you want to protect. As for the hair, I kind of pushed them into making it green.

**Gohda:** I focused on making her cute.


➡ She looks stylish and comfortable!
⬅ Miina wears this when she works at Herikawa Shoten. Sales probably shot through the roof when she started working there.
➡ Miina wore this outfit (including a padded bra!) when she interviewed for a job and pretended to be 18.
➡ This outfit looks great on her. She sure has a lot of clothes, considering she only brought one piece of luggage with her.
⬆ Miina has a nice body, but she isn't satisfied with it. She thinks it's just average.
⬇ She looks like a healthy high school girl.
➡ Miina didn't get into the high school she wanted to attend, but Maiku helps her enroll in Kizaki High instead. She's very popular with the guys at school.
⬅ Believe it or not, Miina's a wonderful cook. In fact, she's so good she can get Maiku to eat squash, which he hates!
⬆ Miina's natural beauty shines when she wears workout clothes like these.
⬅ It looks like Miina's being a good girl and working out, but in reality she's only wearing this outfit to tease Maiku.
⬆ Her light red hair and brilliant blue eyes are a striking combination. Her eyes are the same color as Maiku's, which is one of the reasons they think they're related.
⬆ HER EXPRESSIONS
Miina always looks cheerful, but her smile hides a deep loneliness.

## Miina Miyafuji

There's a good possibility that Miina is actually Maiku's sister. Like him, she was abandoned by her parents and ended up at an orphanage (although not the same one as Maiku). She was adopted at some point, but she had a problem with her new family and left them. She returned to her old home at Kizaki Lake in search of something permanent to hold on to. She's normally cheerful and has a strong sense of self, but there are times when her face betrays her loneliness.

VOICE ACTRESS
**Mai Nakahara**

## PLEASE DESIGN!

What do the creators have to say about Miina?

**Ide:** I did my best to make her cheerful nature very obvious. I had problems distinguishing her from Koishi (who's also very cheerful)!

**Gohda:** I was careful to make sure she didn't end up like the aggressive half of those stereotypical good-girl-bad-girl duos.

THE OFFICIAL ART OF

# PLEASE TWINS!

| STAFF | |
|---|---|
| creator | Please! |
| director | Yasunori |
| script | Yosuke K da |
| character conception | Taraku U |
| character designer | Hiroaki G |
| art director | Takeshi S (KUSANAGI) |
| animation production | Daume |

## A collection of materials from *Please Twins!*

***Please Twins!*** is a fun and touching romantic comedy about three teenagers who have a crazy time trying to figure out if they're related. The plot is intriguing, and the backgrounds of the characters are well-crafted. The first two volumes of ***Please Twins!*** are on sale now, and Volume 3 is coming out this month from Bandai Entertainment.

text by HIDEKAZU KATO
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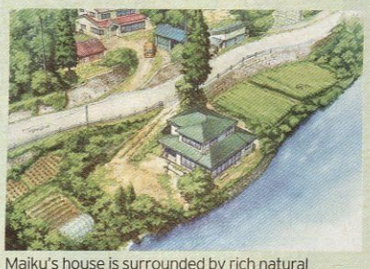
### Up till now in *Please*

***Please Teacher!*** is the first installment of the ***Please*** series. It begins with a fateful meeting between a rookie teacher named Mizuho Kazami and her student Kei Kusanagi. Kei accidentally discovers Mizuho's secret—she's half-alien! For her part, Mizuho learns that Kei is actually older than he looks and suffers from a mysterious illness—whenever he gets startled, he falls into a coma he calls a "standstill," and his growth is stunted. At first they get married and start living together only to hide their secrets, but they eventually fall in love. Unfortunately, Mizuho's real employer deems her actions inappropriate, so Kei's memories of Mizuho are erased, and Mizuho is forced to leave Earth. But she can't stand being separated from Kei, so with a little help from her relatives, she manages to make it back to Earth. Kei regains his lost memories, and they live happily ever after...

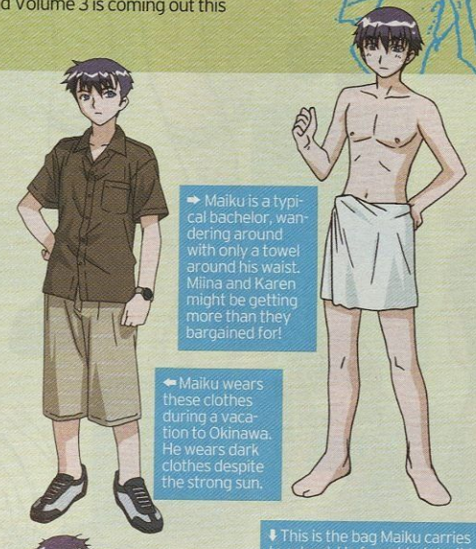
### Right now in *Please*

The spaceship in which Mizuho returned to Earth was spotted, igniting a UFO craze and even making the TV news. A boy named Maiku Kamishiro sees the TV report and is surprised to see his childhood home on the screen. Because he was abandoned by his parents and grew up in an orphanage, he doesn't know much about where he's from. In fact, he only remembers the house from an old picture. He considers the house a part of him, so he rents it and begins living there alone. But he isn't the only one with that idea. Miina Miyafuji and Karen Onodera had similar childhoods. They also visit the house and claim they grew up there, saying that they also want to live in it. Both of them have the same old picture, and one of them might be related to Maiku.



Maiku's house is surrounded by rich natural beauty. The town seems almost forgotten by time.

This is the old house Maiku and the two girls end up living in. It appears in the picture the three have kept since the day they were abandoned by their parents.



➡ Maiku is a typical bachelor, wandering around with only a towel around his waist. Miina and Karen might be getting more than they bargained for!

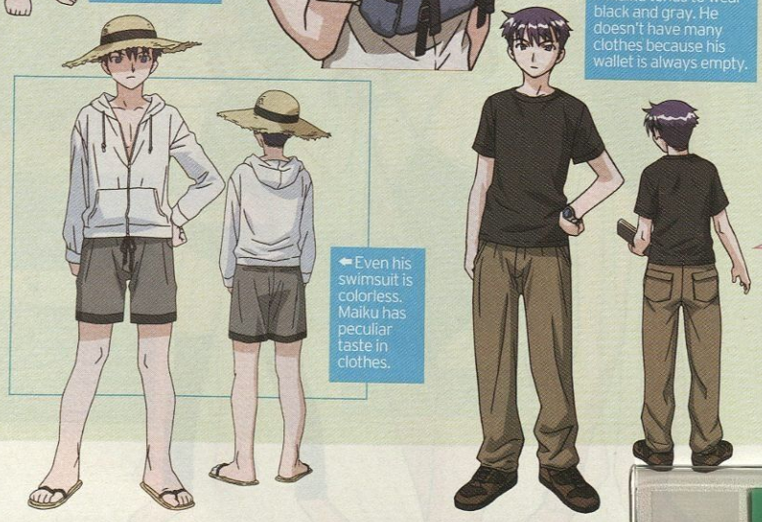
➡ Maiku is a sophomore at Kizaki High in Nagano prefecture. He is one of the two most handsome sophomores in school, and the girls go gaga over him. The other gorgeous tenth grader is his good friend Kousei Shimazaki.

⬅ Maiku wears these clothes during a vacation to Okinawa. He wears dark clothes despite the strong sun.

⬇ This is the bag Maiku carries to school. He forgot to take it to school one morning, but that's understandable since his life was turned upside down!

⬅ Maiku wears a tank top to bed. It looks light and cool, but also slovenly.

⬇ Maiku tends to wear black and gray. He doesn't have many clothes because his wallet is always empty.



⬅ Even his swimsuit is colorless. Maiku has peculiar taste in clothes.

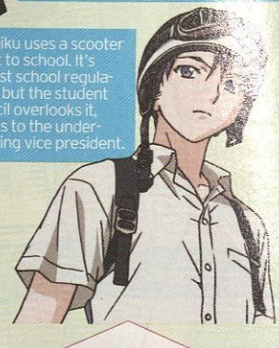
### Maiku Kamishiro

Maiku was abandoned by his parents at a very young age, and he lived at an orphanage until high school. He's not very sociable and doesn't have many friends, partly because of the circumstances of his childhood. But he's very compassionate, and he accepts Miina and Karen as family. He excels in computer programming and makes his living working from home.

VOICE ACTOR
**Daisuke Namikawa**

⬆ Maiku has blue eyes, which is unusual for a Japanese person. Perhaps one of his parents was a foreigner.

➡ Maiku uses a scooter to get to school. It's against school regulations, but the student council overlooks it, thanks to the understanding vice president.

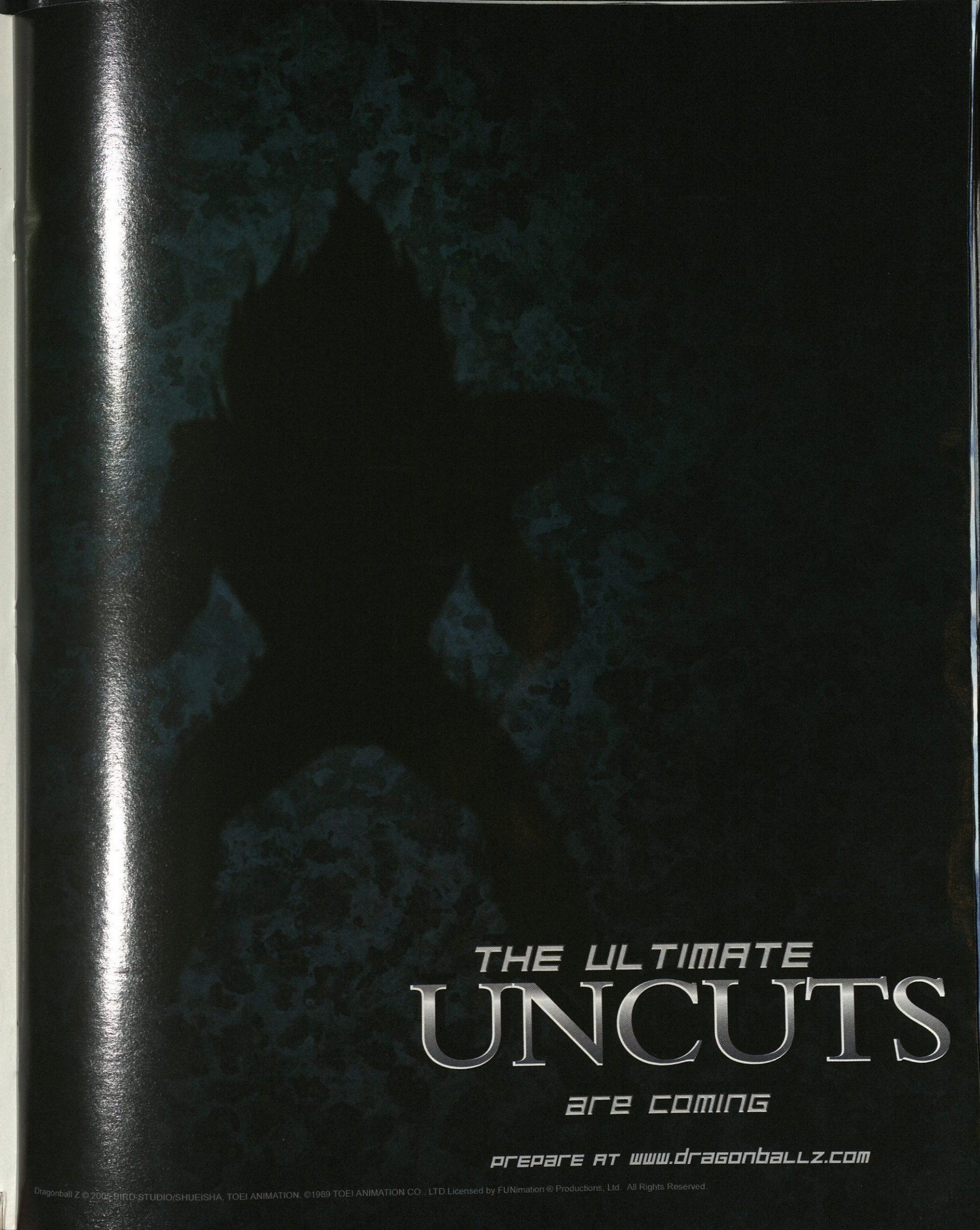


### PLEASE DESIGN!

What do director Yasunori Ide and character designer Hiroaki Gohda have to say about Maiku?

**Ide:** My request for Maiku's design was to make him look mature and independent compared to the other kids his age.

**Gohda:** I made him look dependable all right, but I had a hard time expressing his immaturity.

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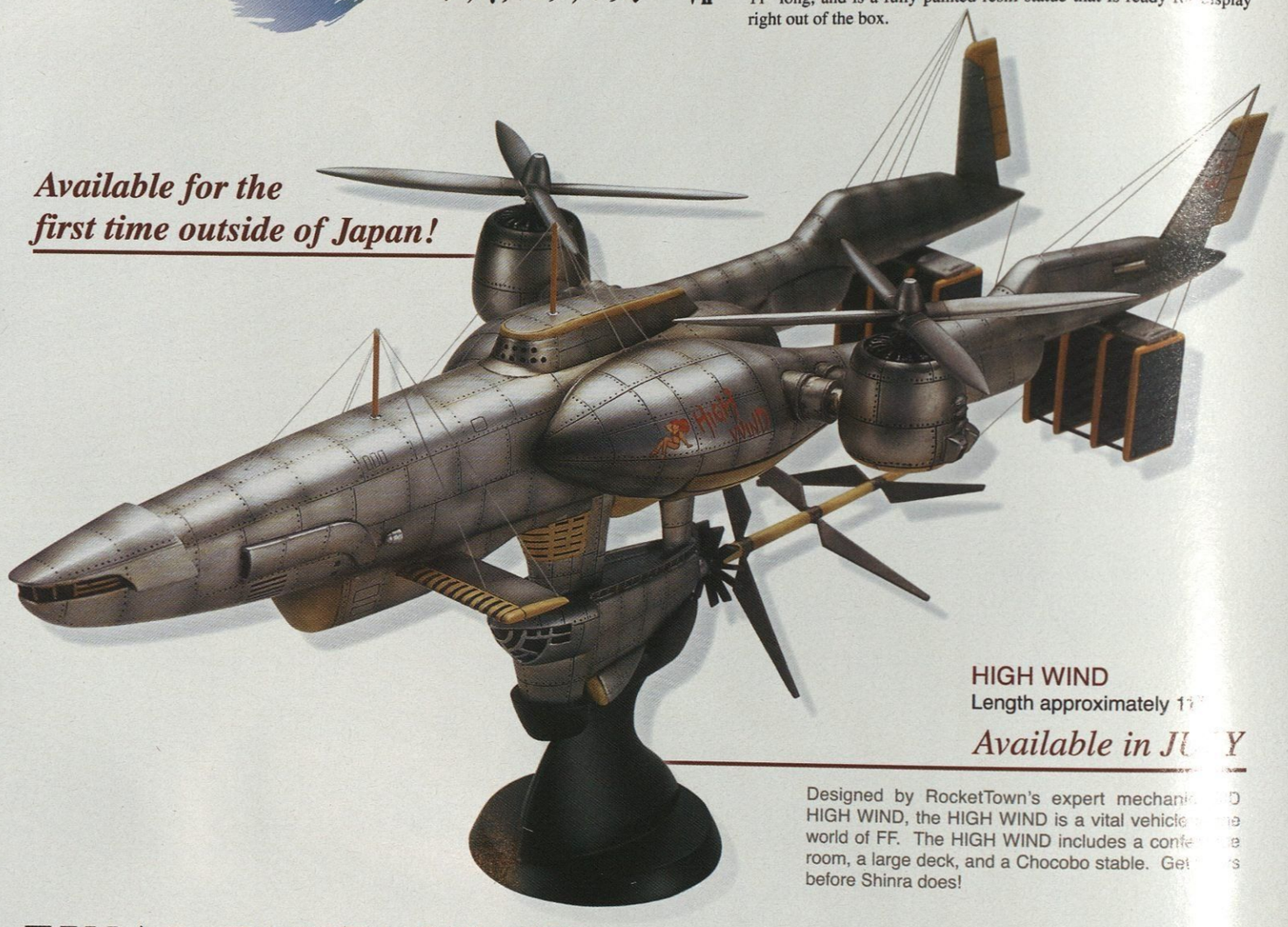

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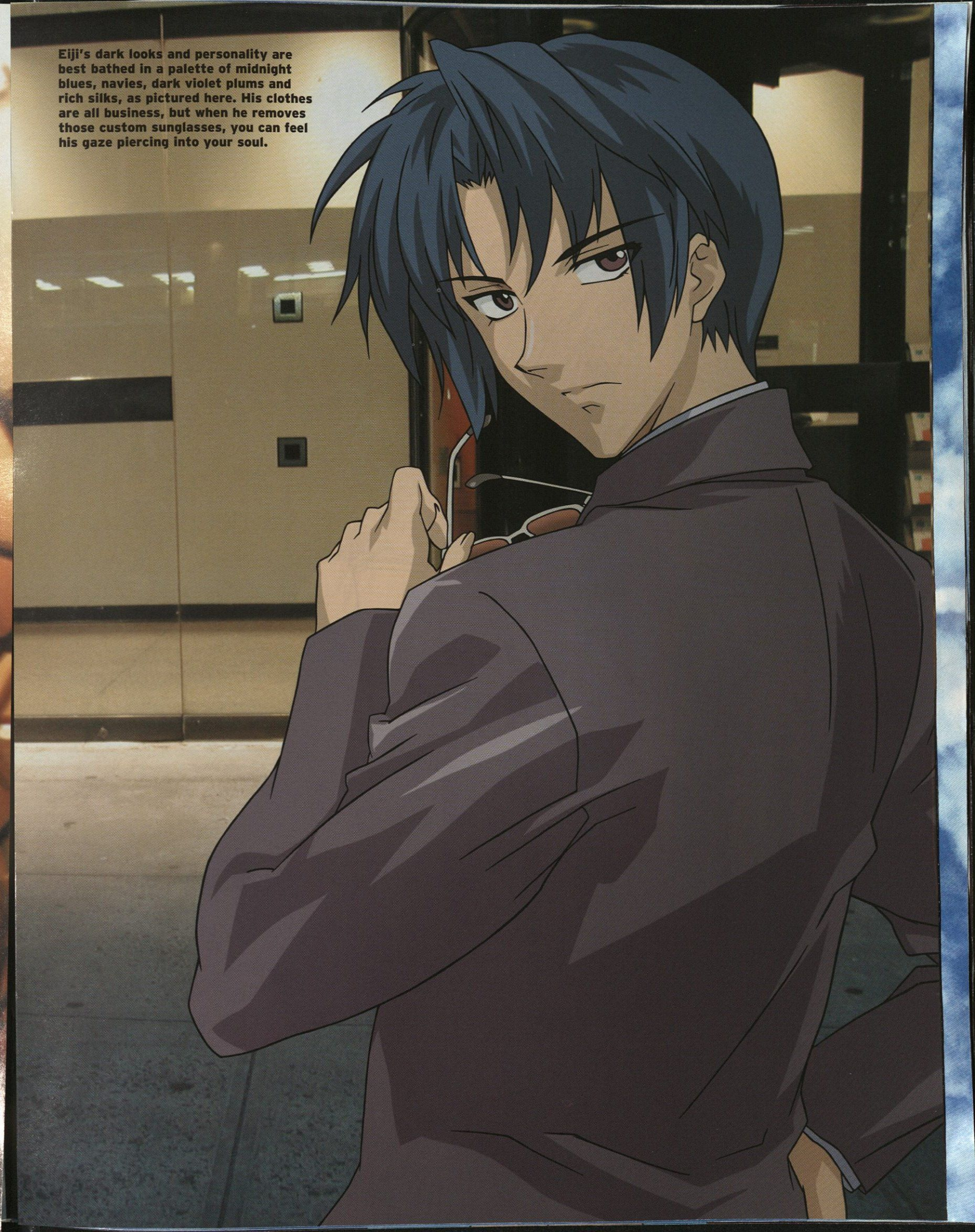
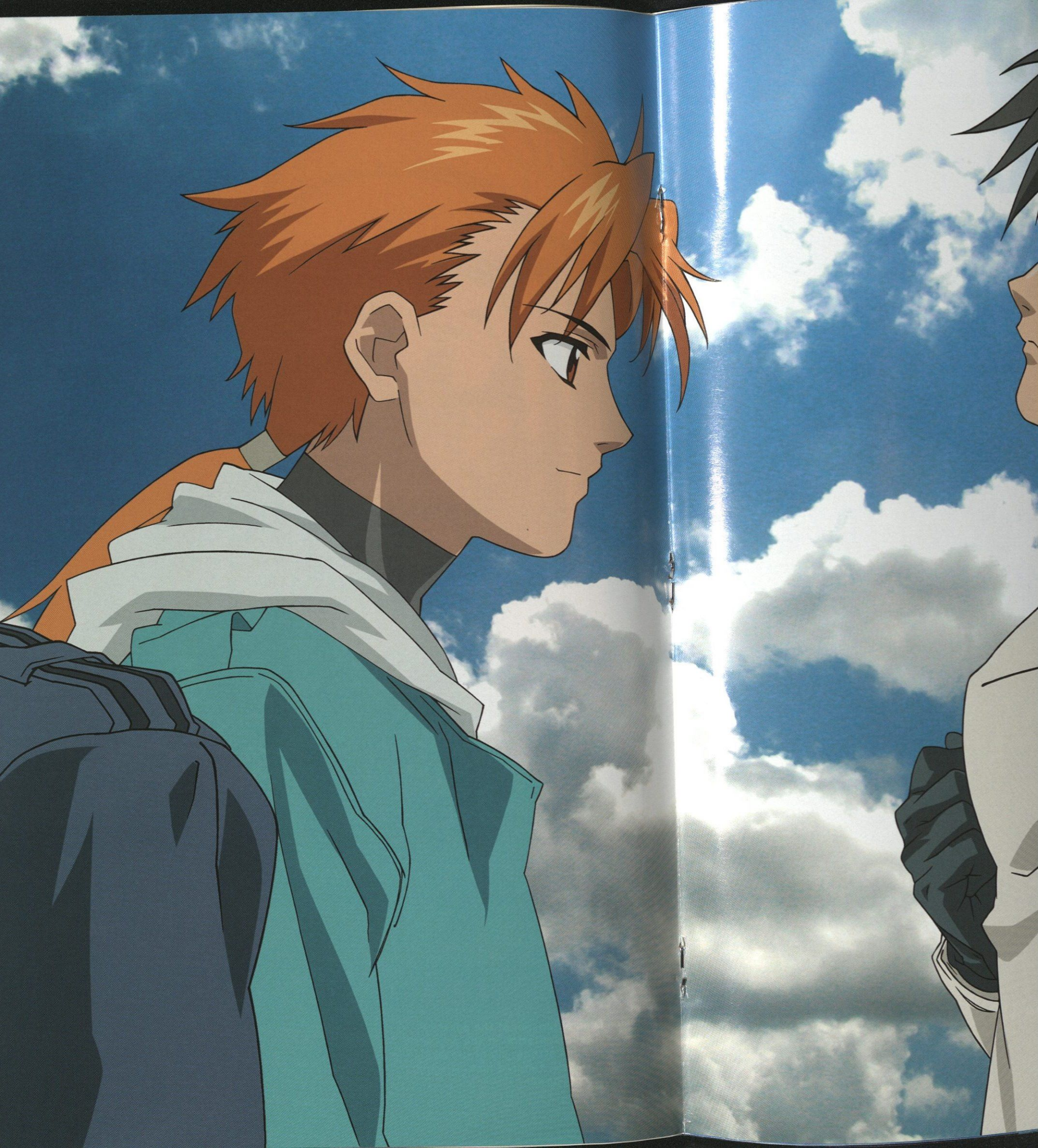
**Fashion is an extension of the person—a physical representation of the psyche, if you will. Eiji's strong, silent presence calls for a classic, tailored look. It's the epitome of cool power.**

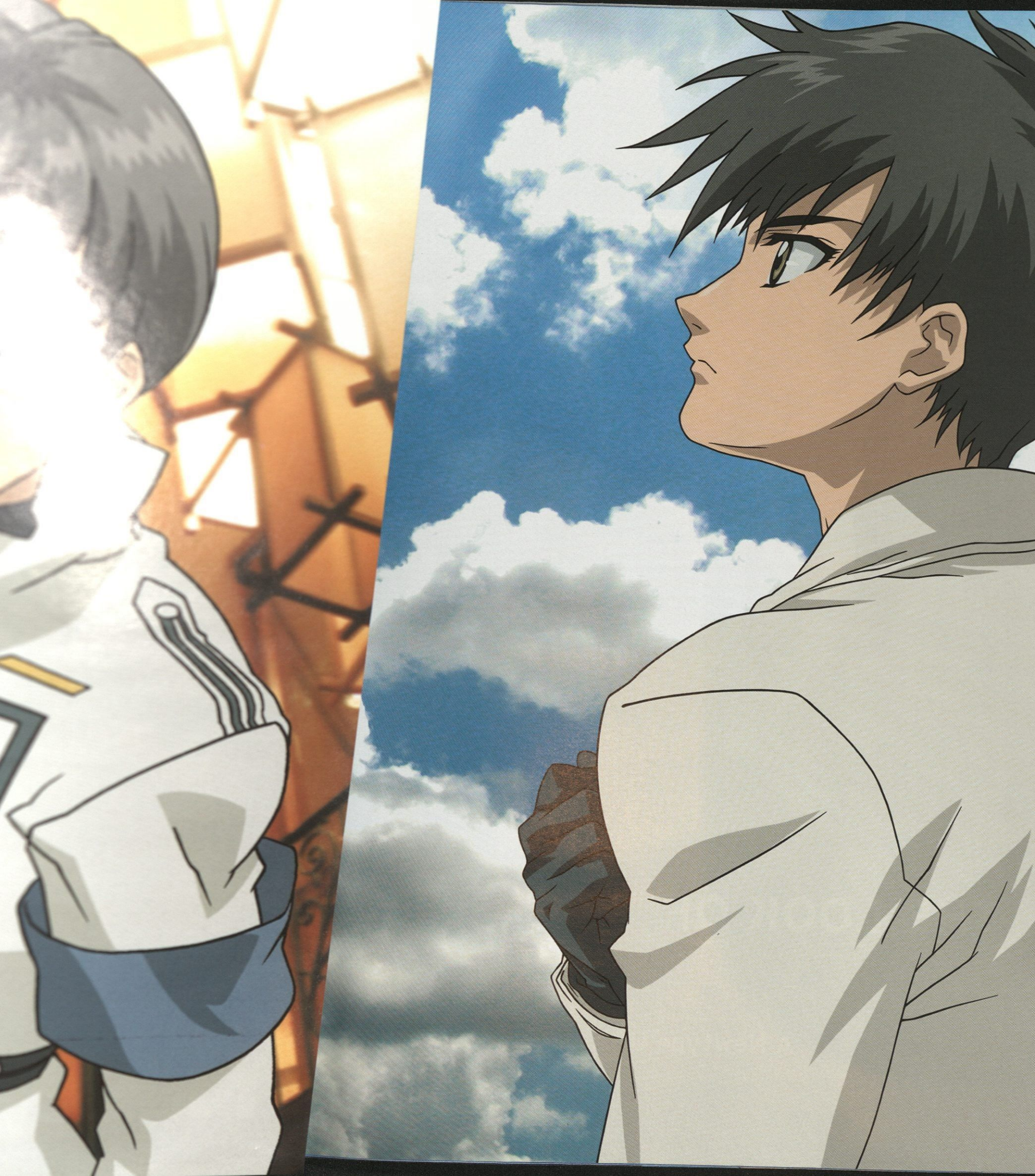
The white trenchcoat with blue trim gives Kai a stately, rigid appearance that meshes wonderfully with his steadfast and dedicated personality. But his eyes hint at vulnerability. What secrets is this mysterious character hiding inside this textile prison?



Eiji's dark looks and personality are best bathed in a palette of midnight blues, navies, dark violet plums and rich silks, as pictured here. His clothes are all business, but when he removes those custom sunglasses, you can feel his gaze piercing into your soul.

Newtype 月刊ニュータイプ USA米国版
THE MOVING PICTURES MAGAZINE
ADV FILMS
FEATURED ON ANIME NETWORK





# E'S OTHERWISE

エス・アザーワイズ

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From left to right: Eiji, Yuuki, Kai and Shen-Lon, the sharply dressed men of *E'S Otherwise*.

Maxim's look is smolderingly sensual, that of a runway renegade whose chiseled visage symbolizes his power and mystery.

# THE LOOK OF E'S OTHERWISE

## A Newtype USA Special Centerfold

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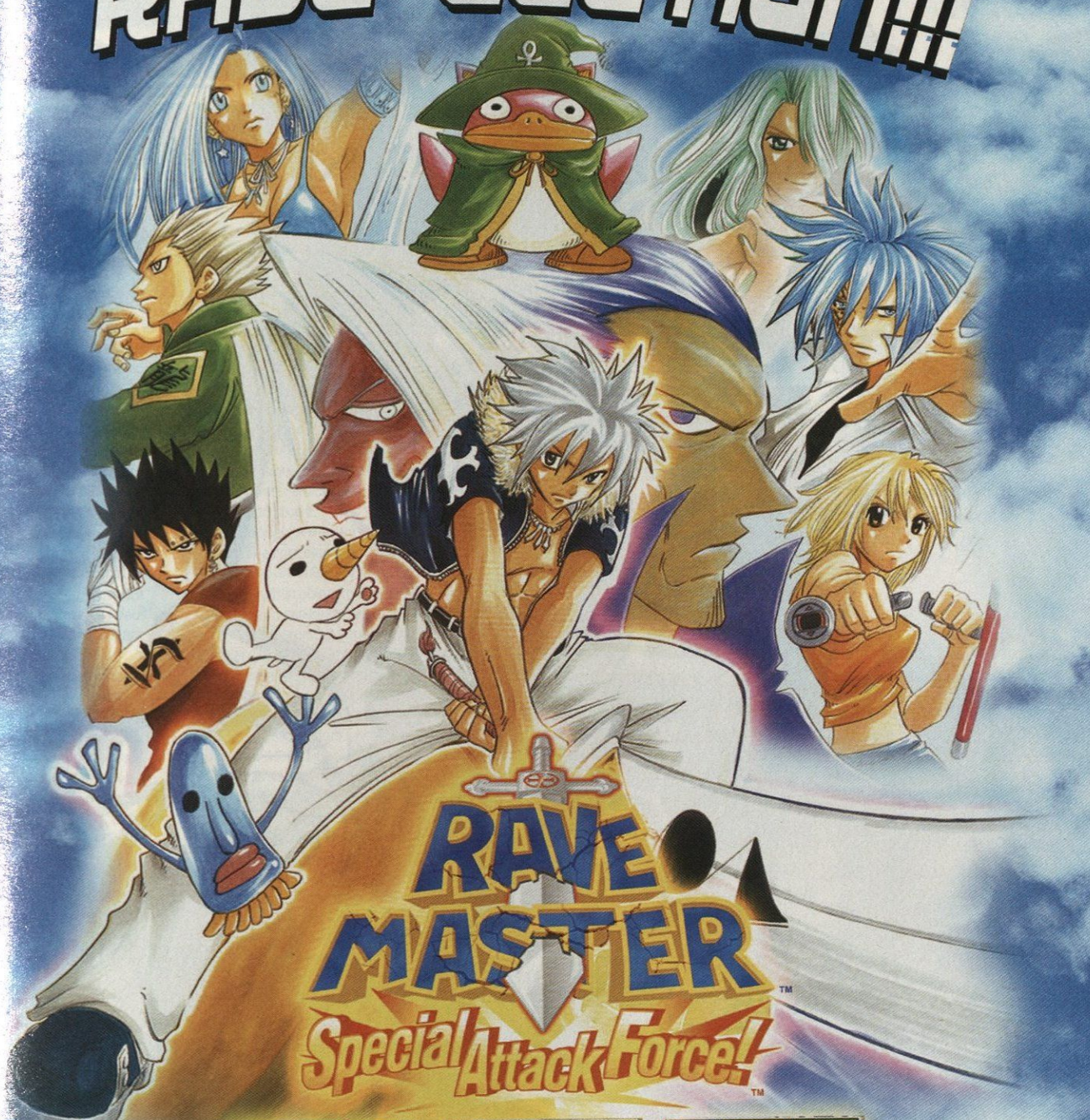

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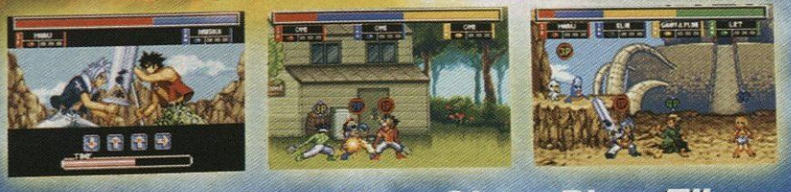

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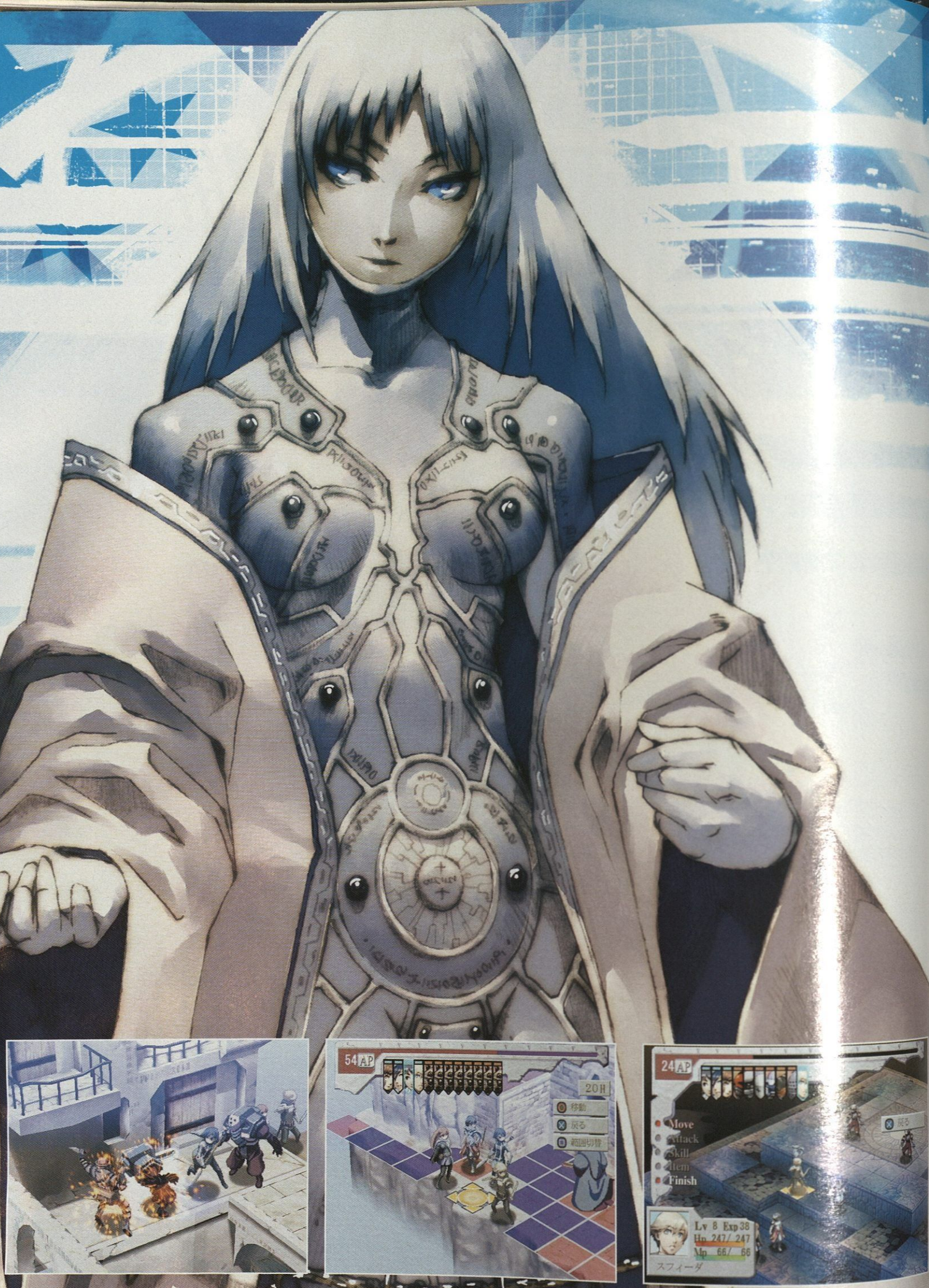





54 AP
20 H
移動
戻る
範囲切替


24 AP
Move
Attack
Skill
Item
Finish
戻る
Lv 8 Exp 38
Hp 247/ 247
Mp 66/ 66
スフィーダ

# WRITTEN IN THE S·T·A·R·S

## STELLA DEUS: THE GATE OF ETERNITY

PS2 GAME AVAILABLE SUMMER 2005 IN THE US FROM ATLUS www.atlus.com text by NICH MARAGOS ©2005 ATLUS

**THOUGH IT SEEMS** to come from nowhere, *Stella Deus* actually has a lot in common with ***Hoshigami***, a strategy role-playing game released in the US on the original PlayStation in late 2001. It has a similar art style, featuring 2D sprites on top of isometric 3D backgrounds (though it's tough to find a strategy-RPG that doesn't use that style these days); it has the RAP system that allows you to perform more or fewer actions per turn, depending on what you do (though here RAP stands for Replaceable Action Position rather than Ready for Action Points); and it even has the same name: *stella deus* and *hoshigami* are Latin and Japanese, respectively, for "Star God."

These similarities aren't coincidental. As it happens, the same developer is behind both games, though they've changed their name from Maxfive to Pinegrow in the intervening years. More importantly, though, they've improved, and even those turned off by *Hoshigami's* excessive level of difficulty should look forward to ***Stella Deus***.

One of the first things that will catch your eye about this title is its graphical style. Though similar to its contemporaries in the genre (such as the recent PS2 RPG ***Phantom Brave***), it's a cut above the crowd in quality—the character sprites are higher-resolution and larger, while the environments are more detailed. The nifty opening movie sets the scene with the sharpest, most natural-looking use of cel-shading yet. That quality extends to the character designs, which are fresh and original, with more texture and shading than the flat, 2D look of many anime-influenced game character designs.

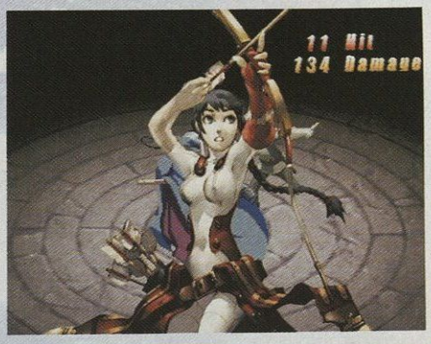
The story puts you in the shoes of Spero, a young boy who lives with the researcher Viser. Viser is on a desperate mission to find out if anything can stop the advance of the Miasma, a mysterious white cloud that sends everything it passes over into oblivion. If left unchecked, it will eventually swallow the world, which elicits varying responses from the inhabitants of ***Stella Deus'*** world—some panic at the thought of the end of the world, some become resigned to their fate, and others, like Spero, are determined to do their part to stop it.

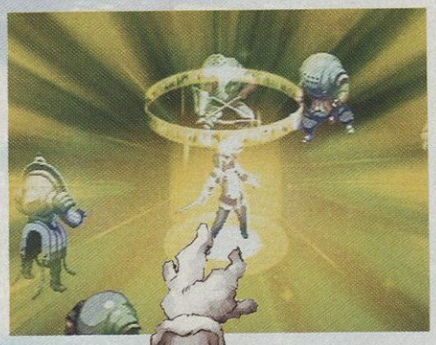
But enough of the story—how does it play? The core element of ***Stella Deus'*** setup is the RAP system. You have 100 action points to spend per turn, and you can keep performing actions until you run out of points. Maneuvers can vary widely in cost; walking around is on the cheap end of the spectrum—unless you're walking through difficult terrain or have a lot of heavy equipment—and attacks or magic will drain your AP faster.

Attacks above and beyond the standard fight command are gained by spending skill points earned through defeating enemies. The upgrades you purchase can be standard special attacks or auto-effects like increasing your resistance to status conditions. If none of the skills strikes your fancy, you can put the points into one of your base statistics for a little more character customization than leveling-up will get you.

The special abilities are nice in combat, but you'll inflict the most damage with combos. You only get limited use of them, so you have to make them count, but they're extremely effective against tough enemies and bosses. To activate a combo, you first select the enemy to use it against, and every character within range of the enemy can participate in the combo. Using your full party against a foe can bring him down in no time.

With stellar graphics, an improved battle system and more balanced gameplay—there are several ways for smart players to even the odds against enemies at a higher level than their party—***Stella Deus*** is poised to be the next big strategy RPG.





### >> CATACOMBS OF TRIAL

The main game is pretty linear, but if you ever need to raise some levels or earn a little dough, the Catacombs of Trial are there for you. Each floor of the 100-level dungeon features enemies on the same level as that floor, so you can pop in and out for some experience against equal adversaries if you ever find yourself outclassed by the main story's battles. You can leave at any time and skip levels you've already completed so you don't start out beating up on the same level 1 foes again and again. Handy, huh?

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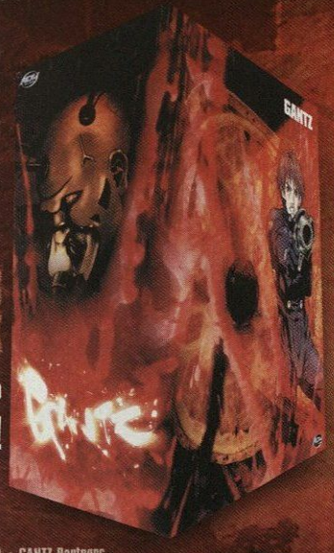


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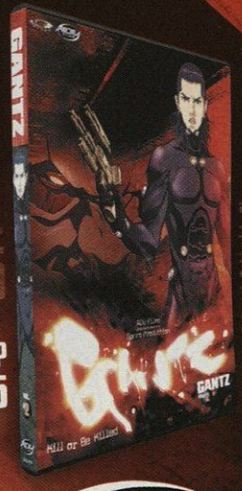


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## Boy-love for the girls

The PC game ***Sukina Mono wa Suki dakara Shoganai!!*** (often abbreviated as "Sukisho" or "Sukisyo") was one of the first boy-love games in Japan. Now this pioneering work has been animated and is currently airing on Japanese TV. We asked ***Sukisho*** producer Tomoko Kawasaki for the lowdown on just what makes this series so good.

"Honestly? All the cute guys," Kawasaki laughs. "Girls just...don't really show up, for the most part." A frank response, but what's her take on the relationship between the main male characters? "I don't believe there's a really fundamental difference between genders. It's natural for people to care about each other. It's a pure feeling. Sora and Sunao don't get along at first, but they gradually come to accept each other for who they are, and realize what they feel for each other."

Sora is a high school student who finally returns to school after an accident lands him in the hospital. He finds himself rooming with a childhood friend named Sunao, but Sora has no memory of his childhood and doesn't remember his buddy at all. They constantly butt heads at first, but as the year rolls on, a deep friendship develops between them. Joined by a boatload of captivating characters, Sora and Sunao learn about each other and the secrets surrounding them in this intriguing mystery full of fun and romance.

The basic storyline will follow the game, but there are plans for some add-ins unique to the TV series. Kawasaki says she wants to keep the boy-love feeling of the original, instead of letting the show degenerate into some kind of girly romance. "Who knows...maybe even guys will get into it," she laughs.

Sora and Sunao aren't the only attractive guys in ***Sukisho***, so don't forget to check out all their friends! These fascinating characters support Sora and Sunao, helping them solve the mysteries surrounding them.

### Sunao Fujimori

The delicate Sunao transferred into Sora's school the day Sora got out of the hospital. They've been friends since childhood, but Sora doesn't remember him.

### Sora Hashiba

Sora is the cheerful and energetic protagonist of ***Sukisho***. He just got out of the hospital after a mysterious fall from a window, and he doesn't have any memories of his past.

### MYSTERIES IN THE SHADOWS

Sora and Sunao seem like normal easygoing kids, but lurking within them are darker personalities named Yoru and Ran. Having split personalities isn't the only thing they have to deal with, though. "Their feelings will become very complicated as they begin to realize the true burden they bear," says Kawasaki. But their feelings for each other will also grow exponentially as they uncover the truth.

# SUKINA MONO WA SUKI DAKARA SHOGANAI!!

**STORY** High schooler Sora Hashiba is finally out of the hospital after mysteriously falling out of a third-story window. His friends Matsuri Honjo and Sunao Fujimori are waiting for him, but Sora has memory problems and doesn't remember anything about Sunao or their childhood together. Sora slowly finds out about himself and Sunao as he investigates the events that landed him in the hospital.

**CURRENTLY AIRING ON TV IN JAPAN**
http://sukisyo.tv
illustrated by MAMI YAMAGUCHI
finished by KUMI AKIYAMA
background by KANON
text by SAORI WATANABE
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**STAFF** creator: PLATINUM LABEL; director: HARUKA NINOMIYA; series organization: MAMIKO IKEDA; character conception: YUZU TSUTAE; character design: MAMI YAMAGUCHI; art director: CHIKAKO SHIBATA; animation production: ZEXCS

**CAST** Sora Hashiba: HIKARU MIDORIKAWA; Sunao Fujimori: SOICHIRO HOSHI; Shinichiro Minato: SHINICHIRO MIKI; Nanami Kai: AKIRA ISHIDA; Sei Hashiba: KOUKI MIYATA; Kai Nagase: RYOTARO OKIAYU; Matsuri Honjo: SUSUMU CHIBA

## Yoru

Sora has a split personality, and Yoru is his alter ego. Unlike the outgoing Sora, Yoru keeps his thoughts to himself. He seems to be tied to Sora's past.

## Ran

Ran is Sunao's other personality. Wild and uninhibited, Ran is the exact opposite of the shy and withdrawn Sunao. He completely trusts Yoru.

# ICHIGO MASHIMARO

**STORY** Nobue, a student at a local junior college, is very close to her younger sister Chika, who's still in grade school. Their longtime friend Miu lives next door, and her crazy antics provide an abundance of joke fodder for the sisters. Add to that mix Matsuri, another little girl from the neighborhood who simply adores Nobue. But the group dynamic changes when a new transfer student arrives at the girls' grade school—a beautiful blue-eyed blonde named Ana!

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www.ichigomashimaro.com
illustrated by KYUTA SAKAI
finished by KEIKO SHIBUYA & KOUSUKE FUJIKAWA
CG works by YUKA MANIWA
text by YOSHIKATSU NAKAGAMI
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**STAFF** creator: BARASUI; director, series organization & script: TAKUYA SATO; script: MICHIKO YOKOTE, JUKKI HANADA & MIHARU HIRAMI; character designer & general animation director: KYUTA SAKAI; sound director: JIN AKETAGAWA; music: TAKESHI WATANABE; animation production: DAUME & ICHIGO MASHIMARO PARTNERS

**CAST** Nobue Itoh: HITOMI NABATAME; Chika Itoh: SAEKO CHIBA; Miu Matsuoka: FUMIKO ORIKASA; Matsuri Sakuragi: AYAKO KAWASUMI; Ana Coppola: MAMIKO NOTO

## A cute show about nothing

There's no denying it: Little girls are cute. It's like an inescapable cosmic truth. And that's exactly what *Ichigo Mashimaro* is about—cute little girls living cute little lives.

Based on Barasui's popular manga, an anime version of *Ichigo Mashimaro* is currently under development, helmed by director Takuya Sato. Fans of the manga may be curious how the anime will approach the free-wheeling, happy-go-lucky feel that made the comic series so enjoyable.

"It was the superb sense of comic timing that made the original manga such a great read," says Sato. "I personally love that kind of down-to-earth look at everyday life. At the same time, I immediately realized I was in for quite a challenge adapting a story like that into an anime. I have to walk a fine line between the way a manga does things and the way an anime has to. Manga makes use of still-frame moments, but in an anime, the characters are moving and alive. It's hard to balance those two approaches, but it's also fun!"

Another main focus for Sato was finding the right way to expose the appeal of a series that doesn't really have a story. "The manga is just the girls interacting in their everyday lives," he continues. "I wanted to keep as much of the flavor of the original as possible, without simply repeating the same jokes and gags that were in the manga. One of the great things about anime versus manga is that you get to play with sounds and the flow of time differently. The staff and I spend a lot of time discussing how to capitalize on that advantage."

Conversely, the girls of *Ichigo Mashimaro* don't waste time worrying about anything. They just take life one day at a time, feeling happy and enjoying themselves. But it's not any easier to produce just because it's a "feel-good" anime. Imagine having to take a story with no real conflicts or climactic events and turn it into an entertaining anime series. Not an easy task.

Sato is putting all of his wisdom and know-how to the test on this show, but he's not worried. "Hey, at least Barasui and I have very compatible taste in music," he says with a wink. You can spend all day mulling over the issues in your head, but in the end it's often better to ditch the analysis and just do it. That's the *Ichigo Mashimaro* way. This show definitely marches to the beat of its own drummer.

"Pay attention to how each section of the staff expresses their own *Mashimaro* feel," Sato hints. Good advice, but...um...what the heck is a *Mashimaro* feel?

**Matsuoka**
Mi… next door to the Itohs. Th… grader likes nothing bet… an playing dress-up. She co… ver to Chika and Nobue's hou… the time, making off-the… comments and stirring thin… with her unpredictable bel…

**Chika Itoh**
Chika is surprisingly well-adjusted for a sixth grader, and she's great at making sweets. She's bosom buddies with her longtime neighbor Miu, who's also in her class. It's not easy having a slacker for a sister and a troublemaker for a best friend, but Chika does all right.

**Ana Coppola**
Ana is an adorable foreign girl who just transferred into Matsuri's fifth grade class. She speaks fluent Japanese but has mysteriously decided to only use English at her new school—despite the fact that she can't actually speak it! She's secretly a little embarrassed by her name.

# Born to be Cute

## CUTE ISN'T JUST A STATE OF MIND

With five little girls in one show, you better believe we'll be seeing a ton of interesting fashion choices. When you've got a story like ***Ichigo Mashimaro***, you can't ignore the importance of cute costuming. From the color-coordinated outfits to the rich patterning on the fabrics, there's a dedication to detail in the portrayal of clothing in the manga, and many fans of the original are eagerly looking forward to seeing some of that in the anime version. Since Miu is so into dressing up, we thought she'd be the perfect one to introduce us to a few of the clothing designs we can expect to see in the show. Take a look at these three outfits—what do you think?

### Matsuri Sakuragi

Matsuri is a 5th grader who lives in the same neighborhood as the Itoh girls. Her friends to cry a lot. You could describe her as likeable and charming, but the truth is she's a nitwit who falls victim to her own antics more often than not. Nobue always looks out for her.

### Nobue Itoh

Chika's big sister Nobue goes to junior college. If you didn't know her, she would seem like a nice young lady, but she's actually pretty rough around the edges, and a heavy smoker to boot. Still, she loves kids and takes good care of her sister and her friends.

# Leave it to the girls!

## Ordinary girls, extraordinary courage

If you had the power to stop a mysterious enemy that threatened the peace of the entire world, would you jump into action? ***Jinki: Extend*** follows a group of courageous girls who decide to do just that—stand up and fight to save the world. In doing so they'll have to engage in a series of bloody battles, but they've got an ace in the hole: *Moribito*, a Jinki robot whose name means "the guardian." Based on Sirou Tunasima's manga series ***Jinki*** and ***Jinki: Extend***, this anime features plenty of mind-blowing robot action and deep mystery as it simultaneously follows *both* manga stories.

"I thought the ***Jinki*** manga series was really interesting. It was the sort of thing that would stimulate the minds of robot lovers," says producer Toshimichi Ohtsuki. "After reading it, I immediately decided to do an anime adaptation. There were many obstacles, but I really wanted to make a good robot show."

Ohtsuki's young and energetic staff is giving their all to make ***Jinki: Extend*** the best anime series it can be. According to director Masahiko Murata, "The characters are all ordinary girls who find themselves in a strange situation—piloting gargantuan mecha. We're trying to portray the emotional aspects of that situation." The staff's mecha-drawing approach goes against the current trend in robot anime. "We actually animated the Jinki mecha by hand instead of using 3D CG. We also tried to be creative with color tones and camera work, in order to make the impact of the giant robot substantial on-screen. The very first combat scene is overwhelming. It's something you should definitely look forward to!"

### Akao Hiiragi

Akao doesn't remember anything that happened more than three years ago. A good-natured girl, she's devoted to making other people happy. Many mysteries surround her, including her ability to deactivate Jinki just by touching them.

# JINKI: EXTEND

**STORY** In the 1980s, a series of fierce battles took place in Venezuela as a secret government organization known as Angel fought the gigantic Ancient Jinki humanoid weapons. Years later, the world is rocked by a series of inexplicable explosions that are powerful enough to level an entire city. People soon refer to these bizarre incidents as the Lost Life Phenomenon. Meanwhile, Akao, a young Japanese girl with partial amnesia, works at a Shinto shrine and searches for clues to her lost memories. Her life takes a dramatic turn when she comes face-to-face with a Jinki robot!

**CURRENTLY AIRING ON TV IN JAPAN**
www.jinki.info
illustrated by NAOTO HOSODA & KATSUYUKI TAMURA
finished by YO IWAIDA
background by NAOKO OSAKABE
special effects by NAOYUKI FUKUDA
text by YUICHI ASANO
©戦鬼彩舞ノマッグガーデン・アンヘル日本支部

**STAFF** creator: SIROU TUNASIMA (manga running monthly in Mag Garden's *Comic Blade*); planning: TOSHIMICHI OHTSUKI; director: MASAHIKO MURATA; series organization: NARUHISA ARAKAWA; character design: NAOTO HOSODA; mecha design: KATSUYUKI TAMURA; art director: NAOKO OSAKABE; music: KENJI KAWAI; sound director: KAZUHIRO WAKABAYASHI; sound production: FOINSE & DAX; animation production: feel; production: GANSIS

**CAST** Aoba Tsuzaki: FUMIKO ORIKASA; Akao Hiiragi: YUUNA INAMURA; Lui Kosaka: YUKARI TAMURA; Minami Kosaka: YOSHINO TAKAMORI; Elnie Tachibana: TOMOKO KAWAKAMI; Satsuki Kawamoto: AI NONAKA; Mel J. Vannet: JUNKO MINAGAWA; Ryohei Ogawara: TAKUMA TAKEWAKA; Shizuka Tsuzaki: SATSUKI YUKINO

## Aoba Tsuzaki

The gentle-hearted Aoba finds it hard to express her true feelings and doesn't have very many friends her own age. She begins to blossom after becoming a Jinki pilot. She really likes building model robots!

## Lui Kosaka

Lui is another Jinki pilot, and she and Aoba have a friendly rivalry going. Lui acts cool and aloof most of the time, making her seem mature for her age, but she also likes to joke around.

## WELCOME TO CLASS 2-A

### Thirty-one flavors to choose from

The students in Negi's class are all unique. Their personalities vary widely from cheerful types like Asuna to quieter girls like Nodoka. There are 31 students in Negi's class, so each of our readers should be able to find someone to fit their own personal taste.

### Evangeline A.K. McDowell

Negi received an annotated class list when he first reported to the academy, and one of the notes suggests that he consult with Evangeline if he gets involved in any trouble. Obviously, she's no ordinary student...

### Asuna Kagurazaka

Asuna is a very proud girl with excellent athletic abilities. She lives with Negi at the request of the head of the academy, but she likes older guys and hates little twerps like Negi.

### Konoka Konoe

Konoka is the granddaughter of the head of the academy. She speaks with a Kyoto accent and behaves like a traditional Japanese woman. Despite her calm demeanor, she's been known to blurt out some surprisingly biting barbs.

### Negi Springfield

Negi is a ten-year-old boy who happens to be the homeroom teacher for Class 2-A at Mahora Academy. He's hiding the fact that he can use magic.

# Heroine Overdose

### Chachamaru Karakuri

No doubt about it[illegible] to be a robot, but son[illegible] she's in Class 2-A. [illegible]list has a note abo[illegible]hat says in case of em[illegible] you should contact [illegible] partment of engin[illegible]m- mediately. What k[illegible] emergency coul[illegible]

### Ayaka Yukihiro

Ayaka, the class rep of 2-A, is always at odds with Asuna. She has a thing for younger boys and likes Negi a lot.

### Nodoka Miyazaki

Nodoka is a bookworm who works for the school library. She's darn cute, but her face is usually hidden behind her hair.

## Something for everyone

We live in an age where many anime focus a little too much on cute and innocent-looking characters that simply feed viewer fetishes. But tastes vary, and any given person won't necessarily jump for joy just because some characters have oh-so-enticing features like cat-ears and big breasts, or sharp intelligence and rugged good looks. We'd rather watch shows featuring personalities we can truly sympathize with on a human level, right? Ahem...*right*? If you feel the same way, look no further, because ***Maho-sensei Negima!*** is the anime for you!

The main character Negi Springfield is the young teacher of Class 2-A, which consists of 31 female students. Every individual in the class is... well...rather unique. Few students fit the definition of a typical anime cute girl, but fans are still sure to go crazy over these peculiar lasses. You'll meet a girl who's more two-faced than the Roman god Janus, an extremely quiet girl with exceptional athletic abilities and even a mildly chubby girl who can cook up a storm. Such quirky characters tend to be left out of cute-girl shows, but ***Negima!*** is different. It offers the chance to find the perfect anime heroine to suit your very own tastes. With 31 distinctive characters to choose from, you'll find that each one has a certain special *something* that makes her the one-and-only girl for *somebody*.

Director Nagisa Miyazaki comments, "I didn't make this anime into one of those shows that only focuses on the appearance of the characters." Each character in ***Negima!*** has a detailed background and personality. Let's join Negi as he discovers each student's strongest asset!

## MAHO-SENSEI NEGIMA!

**STORY** Ten-year-old Negi Springfield graduated first in his class at a magic school in England, and now he has a new goal—to become a great "Magister Magi" magic-user. As part of his training, he's been sent to Mahora Academy in Japan, which is run by his father's friend. He ends up teaching a class of 31 eighth grade girls.

**CURRENTLY AIRING ON TV IN JAPAN**
www.negima.ne.jp
illustrated by FUMIKO KON
colored by MIYOKO KOBAYASHI
finished by XEBEC M2
text by HIDEKAZU KATO
©赤松健／講談社・関東魔法協会

**STAFF** creator: KEN AKAMATSU (manga currently running in Kodansha's *Shukan Shonen Magazine*); director: NAGISA MIYAZAKI; series organization: ICHIRO OKOUCHI; character design: HATSUE KATO; animation production: XEBEC

**CAST** Negi Springfield: RINA SATO; Asuna Kagurazaka: AKEMI KANDA; Konoka Konoe: AI NONAKA; Ayaka Yukihiro: JUNKO MINAGAWA; Nodoka Miyazaki: MAMIKO NOTO; Chachamaru Karakuri: AKENO WATANABE; Evangeline A.K. McDowell: YUKI MATSUOKA

# WARNING

Warning to viewers: When watching this show, please watch in a brightly lit room and sit as far from the TV screen as you can. Please avoid watching for long periods of time and take breaks every so often. Extra caution should be taken when the viewer is a child or a person with hearing problems.

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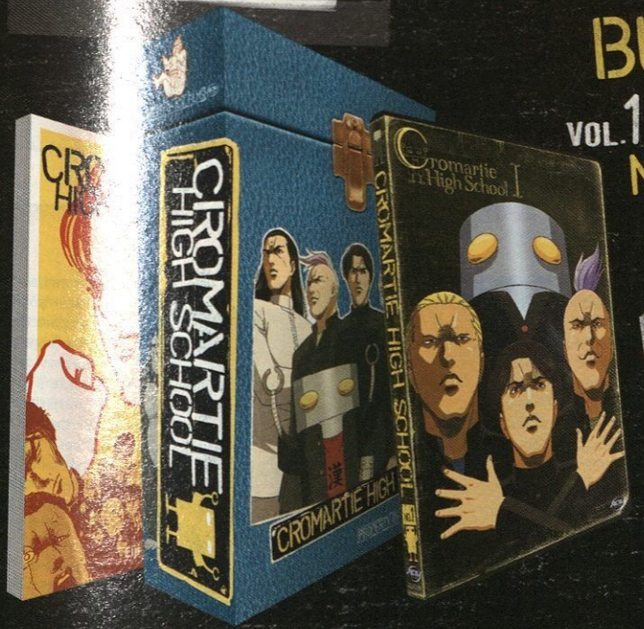
MARCH 15, 2005

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# SENTOU YOUSEI SHOUJO TASUKETE! MAVE-CHAN

OVA

**ON SALE NOW IN JAPAN**

text by YOSHIFUMI HASHIMOTO

©2002 神林長平・早川書房／バンダイビジュアル・ビクターエンタテインメント・GONZO
©2005 神林長平・早川書房／バンダイビジュアル

**STAFF** creator: CHOHEI KAMBAYASHI; director & script: TAKESHI MORI; storyboards: YUJI MORIYAMA; character conception: IKUTO YAMASHITA; animation character design: NAOKO NAKAMOTO; sound director: YOTA TSURUOKA; production assistance: CHAOS PROJECT; production: STUDIO FANTASIA & BANDAI VISUAL

**CAST** Mave: NANA MIZUKI; Super Sylph: SAYAKA OHARA; Sylphid: KAORI SHIMIZU

## Hardcore sci-fi turned girly goodness

Let's see...***Sentou Yousei Yukikaze*** (available in the US from Bandai Entertainment) is a sci-fi series featuring fierce dogfights. But ***Sentou Yousei Shoujo Tasukete! Mave-chan*** is a girl-centric ***Yukikaze*** spin-off. If it's obvious to you how hardcore sci-fi spins off into a show about girls, we commend you. Apparently, it all started one day when ***Yukikaze's*** mechanical designer Ikuto Yamashita was doodling idly after a nasty hard-drive crash, and he ended up drawing "female" versions of the fighter planes he was supposed to be working on. As soon as these cuties appeared on the Internet, they garnered lots of attention, which then led to commercialization. In response to fan pressure, it's now become an OVA! All the characters are named after fighter planes in ***Yukikaze***. Takeshi Mori, famous for ***Stratos 4***, is in charge of direction and script. If you like girly shows, get ready for what the staff has cooked up just for you!

# KORE GA WATASHI [illegible] GOSHUJIN-SAMA

TV

**SCHEDULED TO AIR ON TV IN JAPAN THIS SPRING**

www.bs-i.co.jp:8080/anime/goshujinsama

text by YOSHIFUMI HASHIMOTO

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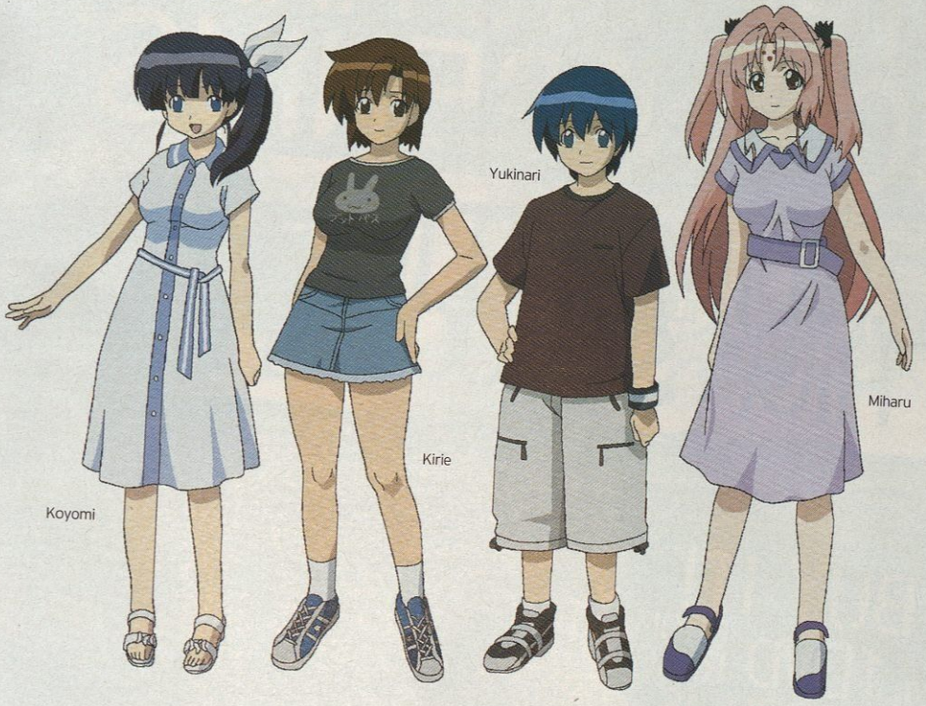
©まっつー・椿あす／スクウェアエニックス・
御主人様プロジェクト

**STAFF** author: MATTSU; illustrator: ASU TSUBAKI (manga running serially in Square Enix's *Shonen GanGan Powered*); direction & series organization: SHOJI SAEKI; script: JUKKI HANADA, TAKASHI AOSHIMA & NATSUE YOGUCHI; character designer & general animation director: KAZUHIRO TAKAMURA; animation production: GAINAX & SHAFT

**CAST** Izumi Sawatari: MASUMI ASANO; Yoshitaka Nakabayashi: JUNKO MINAGAWA; Mitsuki Sawatari: AI SHIMIZU; Anna Kurauchi: KANA UEDA

## Smok[illegible] hot anime maids

***Kore g[illegible]atashi no Goshujin-sa*** is an up[illegible]ing anime featuring maid g[illegible]ong the lines of ***Maho-matic***, ***H[illegible]ukyo Maid Team*** and ***Steel Ar[illegible]Kurumi***, and there's a strong po[illegible]bility that this one will turn out t[illegible]e a classic representative of the g[illegible]nre! The story goes a little somet[illegible]ng like this: One day, two pretty [illegible]sters run away from home and invite themselves to live and work in a mansion as maids. Their uniforms are super-hot, and the show is filled with all the sexiness and raucous gags that made us fall in love with the original manga. This is sexy slapstick at its best. Trust us, the staff has *plenty* of experience doing hot maid-girl shows—Saeki, Hanada and Takamura all worked on ***Mahoromatic***!




# GIRLS BRAVO SECOND SEASON

TV

**CURRENTLY AIRING ON TV IN JAPAN**

www.girls-bravo.tv

text by YOSHIFUMI HASHIMOTO

©まりお金田・角川書店／GIRLSプラボー製作委員会

**STAFF** creator: MARIO KANEDA (manga running serially in Kadokawa Shoten's *Gekkan Shonen Ace*); director: EI AOKI; series organization: HIROSHI WATANABE; character design: RYUICHI MAKINO; animation production: AIC

**CAST** Yukinari Sasaki: MAMIKO NOTO; Miharu: AYAKO KAWASUMI; Kirie Kojima: CHIWA SAITO; Kazuharu Fukuyama: RYOTARO OKIAYU; Risa Fukuyama: YUKI MATSUOKA; Koyomi: MASAYO KURATA; Tomoka: AYAKA SAITO; Maharu: SAYAKA OHARA

## Why R-15?

Ever since the first season of ***Girls Bravo*** ended, fans have been waiting with bated breath for the second season, which is now airing in Japan (it's the first TV anime to ever be rated R-15!). Director Ei Aoki comments, "We had difficulty because some of the content was considered inappropriate for TV, but now the show is finally out. There are plenty of bath scenes *without* steam for fans to drool over, so check it out!" The details of those sexy scenes are left up to your imagination for now, but the show must have more to offer than just a few steamy (err... steam*less*) bath scenes. "The characters are cute and [illegible] with a rich variety of facial expressions, and the timing of the dialogue is superb. There are also different costumes in each episode, and then there's Kirie's special technique I'm working hard to bring out her charm." If you need more stimulation from anime, this is the show for you.

# AROUND THE ANIME INDUSTRY IN 5 MINUTES, PART 2

The number of anime featuring cutesy girl characters has been steadily increasing since last fall. Cute-girl shows are being released like mad! Let's take a look at a few of the latest.

## Magical girls

Magical-girl anime has been around for a long time, and every year there are at least a few of them on TV. ***Magical Canan***, based on the hit PC game, was released a few years ago and is still running. It's an orthodox take on the genre where cute girls transform into magical warriors, with a compelling plot and sexy designs. Keep your eyes peeled for ***Okusama wa Maho Shoujo***, which is the charming tale of a wife who turns into a magical girl. They say the main character Ureshiko was based on her voice actress Kikuko Inoue. The anime is still in development, so try to be patient!

Okusama wa Maho Shoujo

## Dames and games

Anime shows with girls based on game characters are becoming mainstream. The game ***AIR*** gathered a lot of attention and impressed Osamu Dezaki, who decided to direct a theatrical version of the story, his first featuring girl characters based on a game. His experience directing timeless classics like ***Ace o Nerae!*** and ***Lupin the 3rd*** films should serve him well here, and we're expecting to be impressed! Then there's ***Ikinari Happy Bell***. Mamoru Yokota, who worked on the character conception for the game, is a popular designer who has worked on many titles with girls, including the PC game ***Magical Canan***. And Keiji Gotoh (known for ***Uta~Kata***) will be in charge of character designs for the ***Ikinari Happy Bell*** anime, so take some time and compare the girls to their in-game versions. ***IZUMO 2*** is also a hit show with girl characters designed by the renowned Kazue Yamamoto.

## The ladies of manga

***Kashimashi ~girl meets girl~*** is the anime version of a manga that's currently running in MediaWorks' *Dengeki Daioh*. It's about a boy who's suddenly turned into a girl by an alien. Then he—well, actually *she* now—falls in love with a girl. This wacky show is based on a manga by Satoru Akahori, a master of cute, girly storytelling. ***Limeiro Ryukitan X*** is the sequel to ***Limeiro Senkitan***, which aired in Japan a while back. The girls in the new show are different from the ones in the previous series, but the familiar uniforms are almost unchanged. This new show, with five all-new girls, is now on TV in Japan. ***Koikoi 7*** is a love comedy about ordinary high schooler Tetsuro and a mysterious girl warrior named Koikoi 7, who has a secret mission. The manga, authored by Morishige, is currently running in *Champion RED* (Akitashoten), and the anime will air in April. Also be on the lookout for ***Guardian Hearts Powerup!***, the manga version of which is now running in Kadokawa Shoten's *Shonen Ace* magazine. Five pretty alien girls and the main character Kazuya live under the same roof in this crazy romantic comedy, which is the second OVA incarnation of the manga.

Limeiro Ryukitan X

## Super-sized heroines

There are many shows where girls transform into superheroines, but ***Ultimate Girls*** is the first one where girls become *giant* heroines. Three high school girls transform into giant

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# EIKOKU KOI MONOGATARI EMMA

SCHEDULED TO AIS[illegible] IN JAPAN THIS SPRING

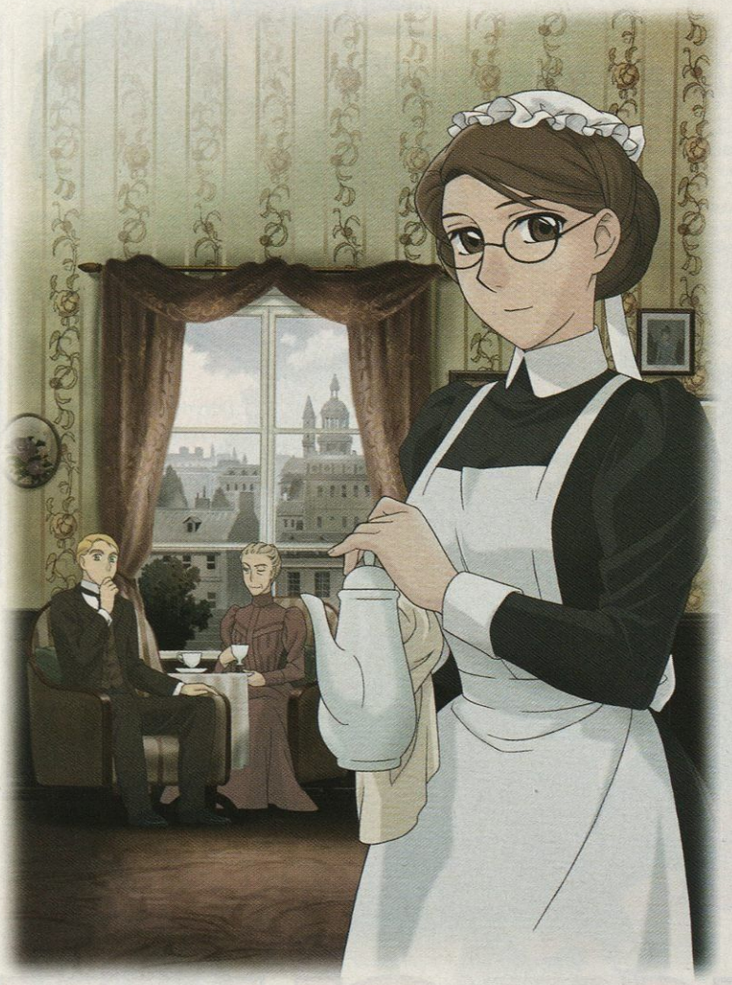
www.emma-victor[illegible]

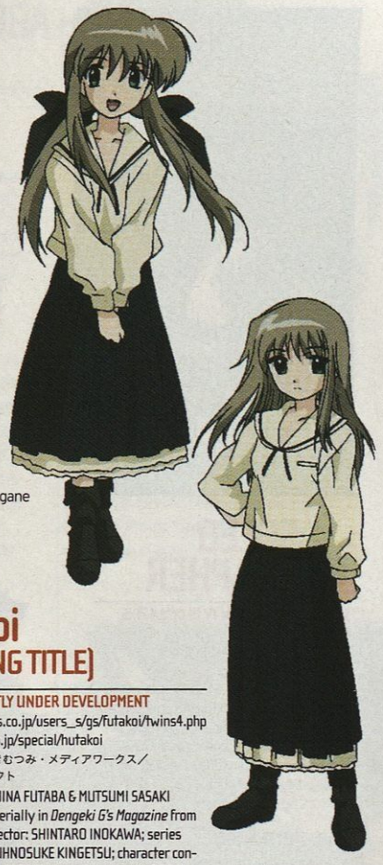
©森薫・エンタープ[illegible]ヴィクトリアン文化研究所

**STAFF** creator: KA[illegible]ORI (manga running serially in *Comic B[illegible]* from ENTERBRAIN); director: TSUNEO KOB[illegible] series organization: MAMIKO IKEDA; ch[illegible] design: YUKO KUSUMOTO & KE[illegible]ZU; art: JUNICHI HIGASHI (STUDIO E[illegible] music: KUNIHIKO RYO; music director: H[illegible]KUTA; filming: ATSUHO MATSUMOTO (PIE[illegible]GITAL ANIMATION ROOM); product[illegible]UDIO PIERROT

## London calling

The popula[illegible]nga series ***Eikoku Koi Monogatari Emma*** is finally being made in[illegible]an anime! "Being faithful to the original manga, I'll try to portray Emma and William's emotions with the utmost of care," says director Tsuneo Kobayashi. The delicate art depicts Emma in great detail. This delicacy is one of the attractions of the original manga, but how will they capture it in the anime? Kobayashi continues, "I'm thinking I want to highlight quiet scenes such as Emma taking off her glasses slowly. I also want to show the details of her lifestyle in order to capture the atmosphere of the Victorian era. I want to focus on tiny acts like looking at flowers or little rocks on the street." Before long, you'll be drawn to Emma's home-grown charm!





Soujyu Shirogane

Sara Shirogane

# futakoi (WORKING TITLE)

**ANIME CURRENTLY UNDER DEVELOPMENT**

www.mediaworks.co.jp/users_s/gs/futakoi/twins4.php

www.starchild.co.jp/special/hutakoi

©双葉ひな・ささきむつみ・メディアワークス／フタコイプロジェクト

**STAFF** creator: HINA FUTABA & MUTSUMI SASAKI (manga running serially in *Dengeki G's Magazine* from MediaWorks); director: SHINTARO INOKAWA; series organization: RYUHNOSUKE KINGETSU; character conception: MUTSUMI SASAKI; character designs: TOSHIMITSU KOBAYASHI; art director: KUNIAKI NEMOTO; animation production: ufotable zippers, flag & feel

**CAST** Sara Shirogane: KAORI MIZUHASHI; Soujyu Shirogane: MAI KADOWAKI

## In a word, *original*

"We tried to make ***futakoi*** original in every sense of the word. It's something you can't miss," comments producer Hikaru Kondo. According to Kondo, the approach used on the production of ***futakoi*** is even different from that of its twin show ***FUTAKOI***, which finished airing in Japan in December 2004. The main characters in ***futakoi*** also vary from those of ***FUTAKOI***, as the focus shifts to the Shirogane sisters. Kondo continues, "The characters in ***futakoi*** are far more realistic than other anime characters. We tried to make the kinds of characters we couldn't do in ***FUTAKOI***. The characters are raucous and volatile, but in other ways they're weak. They have a kind of quiet bravery. They're at a very vulnerable age. We simply hope to adequately portray these ordinary girls living their lives." The images above show a mature-looking Soujyu and Sara. We're curious about how the other twin characters in the story turned out!

# HOT SHOWS OF 2005!

text by YUJI HASHIMOTO

warriors that can only sustain their gargantuan forms for three minutes. Remind you of ***Ultraman***? We could be seeing the birth of an all-new "giant heroine" genre!

### From TV starlets to OVA sweethearts

The OVA version of ***Stratos 4*** was released in 2003, and it's been announced that a second series titled ***Stratos 4 Advance*** will be produced. It's the story of four pretty girls in training to be space pilots so they can save Earth, and it features great flying action and plenty of sexy scenes! ***UFO Princess Valkyrie*** aired for two successful seasons, and the third season will be an OVA. Set in a public bathhouse filled with aliens, childhood friends, sisters and girls galore, this sci-fi love comedy is packed with fan service!

Ultimate Girls

### Novel nymphs

Anime series based on novels are starting to appear more and more these days. The new OVA ***Iriya No Sora, UFO No Natsu*** is scheduled to be released in six volumes. It's a testament to the strength of the original novel that this could be so beautifully animated! Tomoyasu Kurashima, a veteran who has worked on a number of shows featuring beautiful girls, provides character designs.

### Cute beyond cute

If you fancy girls as cute as stuffed animals, ***Damekko Dobutsu*** is the show for you. The many clumsy and unique characters look like humans in animal suits, but they're actually real animals. They're just too cute!

### Game producers get girls

The production of ***Otagi-jushi Akazukin*** is being helmed by game-maker KONAMI and directed by Tetsuro Araki, the episode director for ***Galaxy Angel***. It's packed with cute characters, exciting action and plenty of laughs.

### Girls with an image to uphold

The characters in ***Binchotan*** are the image characters for game software company Alchemist. It's rare to see such adorable image characters in an animation like this! Our hearts are all warmer for having seen them.

Binchotan

## SPEED GRAPHER

SCHEDULED TO AIR ON TV IN JAPAN THIS SPRING

illustrated by MASASHI ISHIHAMA

©2005 ゴンゾ／TAP

**STAFF** director: KUNIHISA SUGISHIMA; series organization: SHIN YOSHIDA; character conception: YUSUKE KOZAKI; animation character design & general animation director: MASASHI ISHIHAMA; art director: JUNICHI HIGASHI; animation production: GONZO

### True romance

In a dark city, an unlikely couple runs for their lives. Suitengu, the owner of the underground Roppongi Club, pursues Tatsumi Saiga, a middle-aged freelance photographer, and a 15-year-old girl named Kagura Tennozu. They're in for the adventure of a lifetime. ***Speed Grapher*** is the story of an ex-paparazzo and a naïve girl who was raised under the strict control of her powerful mother Shinsen, a major player in the world of Japanese finance. The pair runs away together, and amidst the chaos of evading dogged pursuers and fighting for their lives, they fall madly in love. GONZO brings us this passionate love story set in an elaborate world. Propelled by the studio's always dynamic, pulse-pounding animation, this anime is a fairy tale for adults in search of a new kind of escape.

# HOT SHOWS OF 2005!

## LOVELESS

SCHEDULED TO AIR ON TV IN JAPAN THIS SPRING

original illustration by YUN KOUGA

©高河ゆん／一賽舎 2004

**STAFF** creator: YUN KOUGA (running monthly in Issaisha's *Comic ZERO-SUM*); director: YUH KOH; series organization and script: YUJI KAWARA; production: J.C.STAFF

**CAST** Ritsuka Aoyagi: JUNKO MINAGAWA; Sobi Agatsuma: KATSUYUKI KONISHI; Seimei Aoyagi: KEN NARITA; Yuiko Hawatari: KANA [illegible]; Kio Kaido: KEN TAKEUCHI; Midori: MOTOKI TAKAGI; [illegible] AMI KOSHIMIZU; Miss Shinonome: [illegible] NOTO; Misaki Aoyagi: WAKANA YAMAZAKI

### Cats that can sp[illegible]

***Loveless*** is based on [illegible]iginal manga by renowned [illegible] Yun Kouga. This is the firs[illegible] one of Kouga's comics has ba[illegible]made into a TV series. She's a ma[illegible] of dialogue, and we look forw[illegible] to hearing her brilliant style ad[illegible]d for the screen. When sixth-gra[illegible] Ritsuka Aoyagi meets the enig[illegible]c Sobi Agatsuma, the fighting p[illegible]tner of Ritsuka's murdered brot[illegible] Seimei, Sobi asks Ritsuka to bec[illegible]me his new master. The characters in the show battle using "spells," but these special techniques will also be important to Ritsuka's growth. In this alternate version of modern Japan, people are born with cat-ears and tails, which they lose when they sexually mature and discover true love. Ritsuka (pictured at left) is still just a kid, so he still has big ears and a long tail. But will Sobi's sweetly spoken attempts at seduction de-feline our hero?

text by TOMOMI [illegible] YUJI HASHIMOTO

## AROUND THE ANIME INDUSTRY IN 5 MINUTES

### The movie connection

This is shaping up to be an incredible year for theatrical anime, and the trend of adapting popular TV series into smash movies continues. This month, ***Omatsuri Danshaku to Himitsu no Shima***, a new film based on ***ONE PIECE***, will hit theaters. It's directed by Mamoru Hosoda of ***Digimon*** fame and scripted by Masato Ito. Though Ito is new to anime, he is a very popular writer for a number of TV variety shows, and we're looking forward to seeing how he handles this fan-favorite title.

***Futari no Samurai THE FIRST GAME***, another film adapted from TV, is the first movie based on the hit ***Prince of Tennis*** manga and anime series. This double feature will contain one long and one short animated film. The story follows tennis star Ryoma after a stranger claiming to be his brother challenges him.

Those two heavy-hitters are merely the tip of the iceberg. After the success of last summer's first movie, ***NARUTO*** will return to theaters in Japan. ***Case Closed*** has spawned numerous films, and the ninth installment will be released this year. Other movie adaptations include ***Fullmetal Alchemist Shambhala o Yuku Mono***, due out this summer, and ***Wonderful Days***, GAINAX's adaptation of the 3D Korean romance. It will be dubbed in Japanese and released as part of GAINAX's 20th anniversary celebration. ***Appleseed 2*** is a sequel to 2004's stunning feature-length anime, and it will be fully 3D. ***Atagooru*** is a fantasy based on Hiroshi Masumura's popular manga ***Atagooru wa Neko no Mori***. It's a heartwarming story about a chubby cat named Hideyoshi who lives in a surreal world. ***Kino's Journey Nanika wo Suru Tameni –life goes on–*** was a special edition film originally shown at an event last year, but the complete version has been playing at the

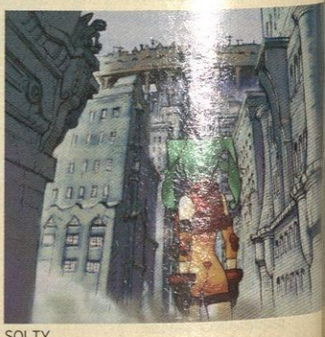
©GONZO / SPIRIT PROJECT

SPIRITS

United Cinemas in Toshimaen in Tokyo since February.

### Go, go, GONZO

GONZO is a powerhouse that shows no sign of slowing down. ***SPIRITS*** is their first theatrical film, and it features character designs by Koji Ogata of ***Boogiepop Phantom*** fame. GONZO is synonymous with state-of-the-art visuals, so expectations run high. In addition, the studio is working on a reincarnation of Marvel-Sunbow's 1980s classic cartoon ***G.I. JOE***, based on Hasbro's perennial action figure line. The 2D-3D hybrid animation may give the Real American Hero a new lease on life, but fans of '80s toy icons can also look forward to ***Transformers Galaxy Force***—another 2D-3D hybrid anime featuring more than 40 computer-animated transforming robots! Next, GONZO brings ***AFROSAMRAI***, chronicling the exploits of an afro-haired samurai played by none other than Samuel L. Jackson. ***SAMURAI 7*** proved that GONZO knows how to make samurai anime, so we're pumped about ***AFROSAM[illegible]***. There's also the tentatively titled ***SOLTY***, w[illegible]s a story about a bounty-hunting fema[illegible]droid. This new heroine of the not-so-dis[illegible]future uses



SOLTY

## STARSHIP OPERATORS

CURRENTLY AIRING ON TV IN JAPAN

©水野良・メディアワークス／SSO Project・テレビ東京

**STAFF** creator: RYO MIZUNO (novel published by *Dengeki Bunko*); director: TAKASHI WATANABE; script: YOSHIHIKO TOMIZAWA; character design: FUMIO MATSUMOTO; mechanical design: KIMITOSHI YAMANE; sound director: TORU NAKANO; music: KENJI KAWAI; animation production: SSO PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

### Space cadets vs. everyone

A nation in space submits to the rule of a strong military alliance, but a group of cadets rebels using only the spaceship they were on at the time of the agreement. Without the support of their own country and branded space pirates by the enemy, they struggle alone in the vastness of space. ***Starship Operators*** is based on a novel by Ryo Mizuno, who also penned ***Record of Lodoss War***. Unlike his lighthearted comedy ***Galaxy Angel***, where Mizuno supervised the TV adaptation himself, ***Starship Operators*** is hardcore sci-fi depicting the dangers of intergalactic war. So you can look forward to remarkably realistic, hyper-kinetic combat scenes. These cadets are going to throw everything they've got into a fight against a foe of overwhelming might!

## BASILISK KOGA NINPOCHO

CURRENTLY AIRING ON TV IN JAPAN

illustrated by MICHINORI CHIBA

©2004 山田風太郎・せがわまさき・講談社／デジタル・アニメ・プロジェクト

**STAFF** creator: FUTARO YAMADA (story) & MASAKI SEGAWA (manga currently running in Kodansha's *Young Magazine Uppers*); director: FUMITOMO KIZAKI; assistant director: YUKIO NISHIMOTO; series organization & script: YASUYUKI MUTO; character design: MICHINORI CHIBA; animation production: GONZO

### Ninja feuds

***Basilisk*** is a brand-new TV series produced by GONZO and based on Masaki Segawa's manga interpretation of Futaro Yamada's classic novel. Segawa contributed to the script and setting of the show, ensuring that it will please fans of the source material. Series producer Hidemasa Arai comments, "The highlight of the anime is the superhuman clash between ten Koga and ten Iga ninjas; each side unleashes a plethora of ninja tricks." But there's more to the tale than fantastic fight scenes. A forbidden romance between Gennosuke (above, left), a Koga leader, and Oboro (above, right), an Iga ninja, promises some heavy drama and intrigue. Perhaps ***Basilisk*** will spur the next ninja craze?

## BUSHILORD

ANIME CURRENTLY IN PRODUCTION

www.bushilord.com

©武士団

**STAFF** general supervisor: TAKAAKI KIDANI; conception, planning & creation: BUSHIDAN (Broccoli, Takara, GAINAX & Aniplex); director: HIROYUKI YAMAGA; character designer: KOU YOSHINARI; mechanical designer: NITROPLUS; mechanical animation assistance: HIDEAKI ANNO; music: KEIKO & KAZU MATSUI; theme song: YAE; production: GAINAX

**CAST** Hikage: YAE; Sin Kazusa: KOSUKE TORIUMI

### Raising the bar

Check out the staff list, and you'll see that ***BUSHILORD*** has big-time potential. In fact, according to Broccoli's Takaaki Kidani, who's supervising the project, there've been high expectations for ***BUSHILORD*** from the get-go. It's slated to expand into several different media, and the visuals from a ***BUSHILORD*** anime short (due out this spring) are expected to raise the bar for the entire medium. Set in a postapocalyptic future where people battle in giant robots to survive an epic conflict, ***BUSHILORD*** is a dramatic sci-fi saga portraying characters through romance, friendship and the chaos of war. The manga and novel have been in print in Japan for some time, and we expect to see various incarnations of the property throughout the year.

only her fists against gun-toting supervillains. And finally we have ***Gosenzo Love Story***, a movie based on the fantasy novel by Miyuki Miyabe. It's scheduled to hit theaters worldwide sometime after the summer of 2006.

### Make mine manga

Many manga are lining up in front of anime studios for a stab at the small screen. ***Gallery Fake***, based on Fujihiko Hosono's long-running comic, tells the tale of a rather unusual underground art dealer. Masashi Sogo, a dynamic scribe who has worked on both TV dramas and anime, will adapt this story. He's credited as series organizer for ***BLEACH***, which is currently airing in Japan.

The popular creative quartet CLAMP has two animated shows slated for this year. Production I.G is currently making an ***xxxHOLiC*** movie, while Bee Train (known for ***.hack*** and ***MADLAX***) will animate ***Tsubasa: RESERVoir CHRoNiCLE***, which features the characters Sakura and Syaoran from ***Cardcaptor Sakura***. They're joined by many popular characters from other CLAMP titles like ***X*** and ***Tokyo Babylon***!

xxxHOLiC

©CLAMP

On the shoujo front, ***Peach Girl*** is based on Miwa Ueda's popular girls' manga, which has sold more than 12 million copies. It focuses on a high school girl named Momo who gets caught up in a cacophony of romantic conundrums. Series organization will be headed by the talented Hiroko Tokita, whose experience on other girl-oriented titles should be a major asset. ***Cluster Edge*** is a rare collaboration between Hakusensha's girl-oriented comic magazine *LaLa DX* and SUNRISE, a studio famous for hardcore sci-fi shows. It's about a mysterious transfer student and his wacky school life. The manga began running in *LaLa DX* prior to the anime release.

Two titles based on current manga series are on the way. ***Erementar Gerad*** is an action fantasy involving magic, hand-to-hand combat and role-playing games. It'll have plenty of cute female characters, too. ***Jinki: Extend*** is based on a robot-action comic, a rarity for the manga industry. The show will include both ***Jinki: Extend*** and its prequel ***Jinki***, and surprisingly, both story arcs will develop simultaneously in the anime. It will also feature many cute girls, to the delight of drooling male fans everywhere.

### CG or bust

***Digimon*** (which aired in Japan between 1999 and 2001) has recently returned to TV as the special program ***DIGITAL MONSTER X-evolution***. This is the first ***Digimon*** done entirely in 3D CG. ***Molly, Star-Racer*** is an exciting story about a female space pilot. The show is a Japanese-French co-production, and the race scenes will be done in 3D computer graphics.

### Game on

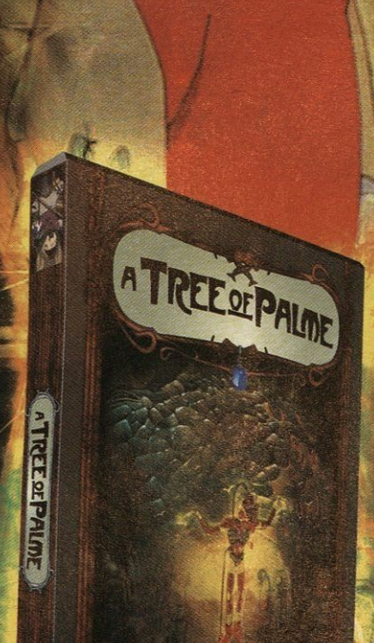
Lastly, we have two upcoming titles based on video games. The popular ***Super Robot Taisen*** series of role-playing games will be made into a three-volume OVA, which will feature characters and robots that previously appeared only in the games. ***Xenosaga*** is a space opera based on the sci-fi RPG of the same name. Go Koga, who has participated in various ***Yu-Gi-Oh!*** and ***ONE PIECE*** movies, was chosen as chief director, and the character designs are being done by Nobuteru Yuki, who's famous for his work on ***Escaflowne***.

Whew! 2005 already looks to be an action-packed year for anime fans in Japan, but it's not over yet. Turn the page and read on for our roundup of shows aimed squarely at the fellas!

"A DAZZLING, ALLEGORICAL, SCIENCE-FANTASY TALE RICH IN ENTERTAINMENT VALUE AND MEANING."

-fps: The Magazine of Animation-

# A TREE OF PALME




A Tree of Palme © 2001 Takashi Nakamura • GENCO/PALME Production Committee

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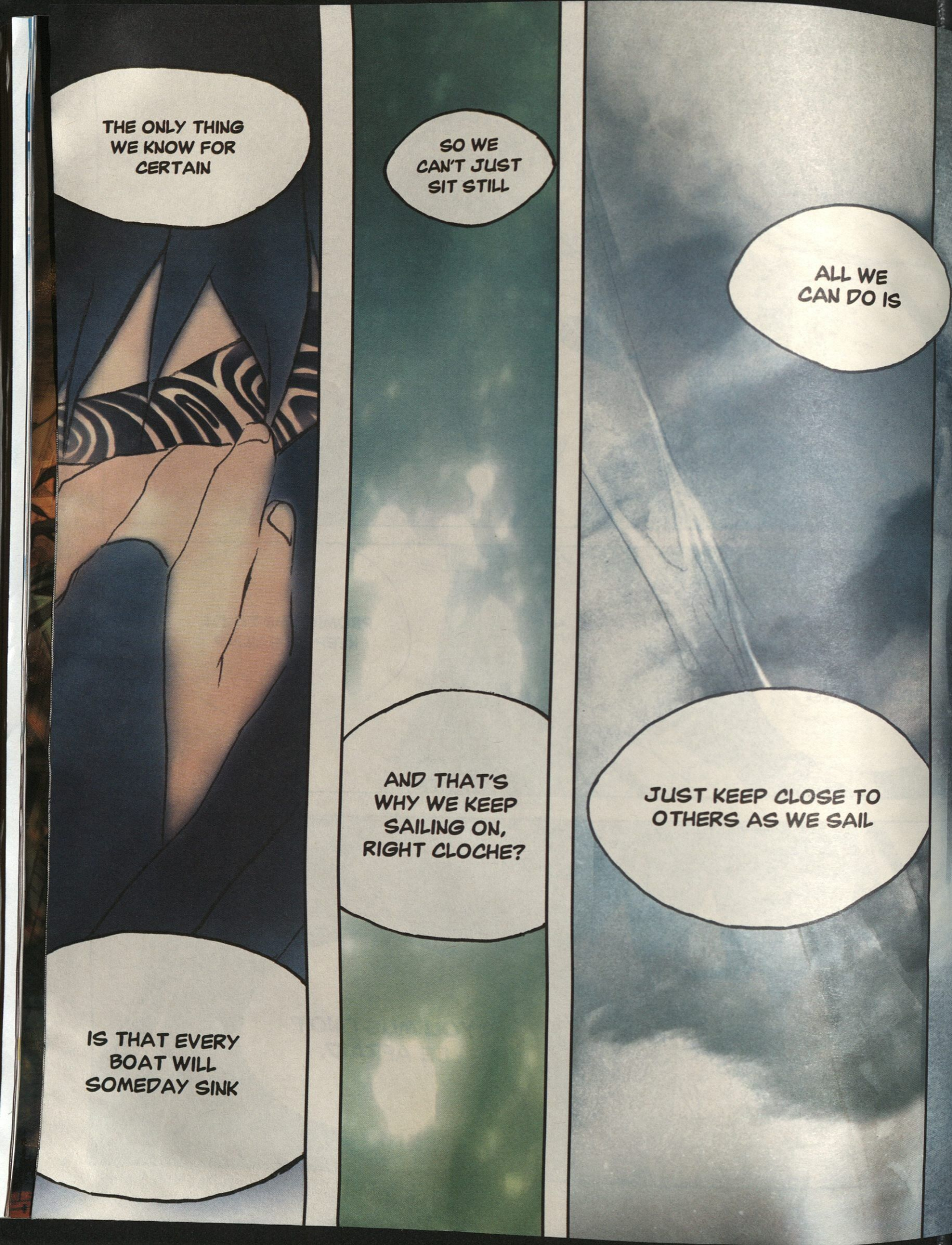
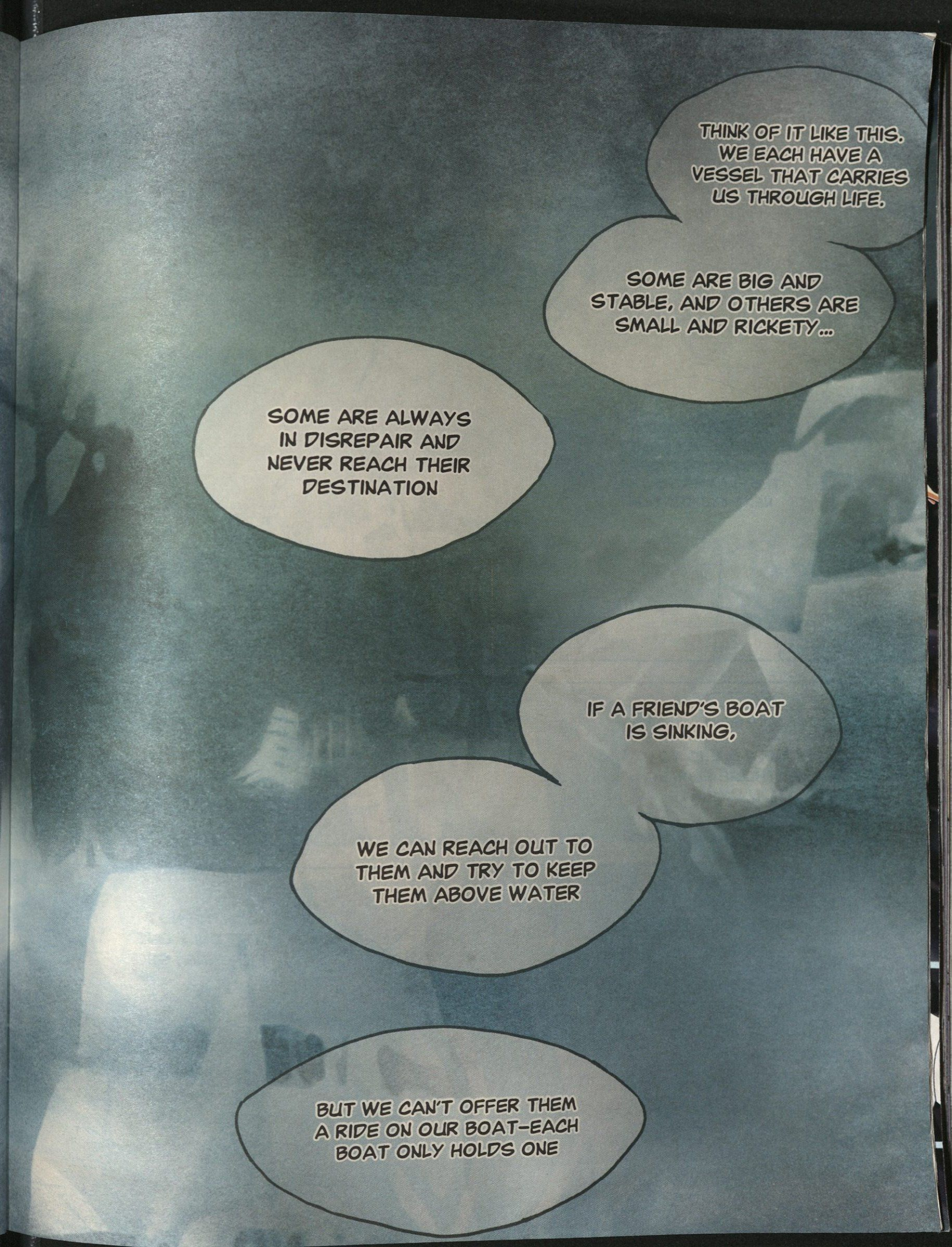
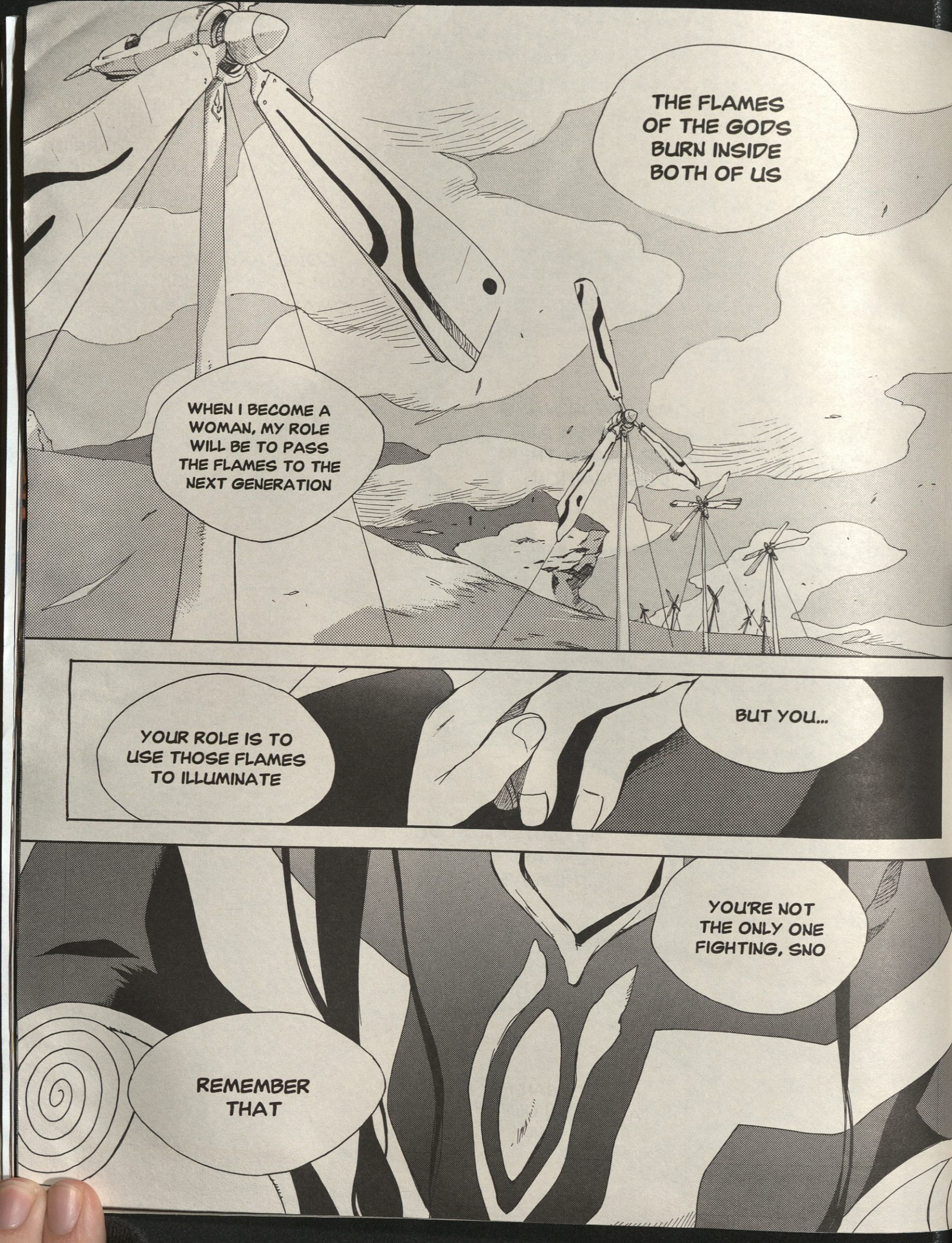
THE MOVING PICTURES MAGAZINE

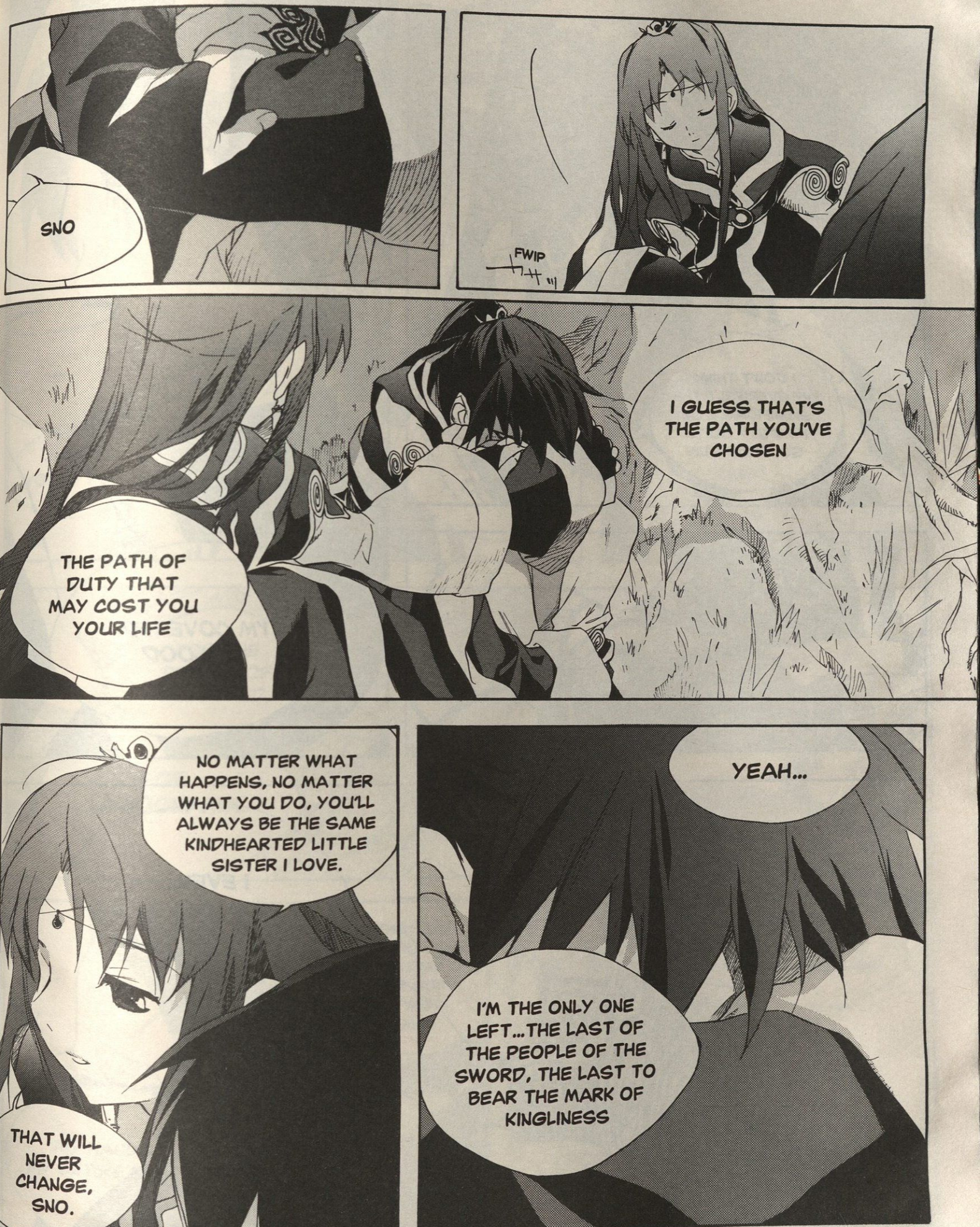
SAKIS
I KNOW YOU'LL FIND SOMEONE TO SHARE YOUR DREAM
SOMEWHERE OUT THERE
TO BE CONTINUED...

EVEN IF MY BOAT SINKS
PROMISE ME YOU'LL KEEP ON SAILING
YOU MUST NOT BE AFRAID.

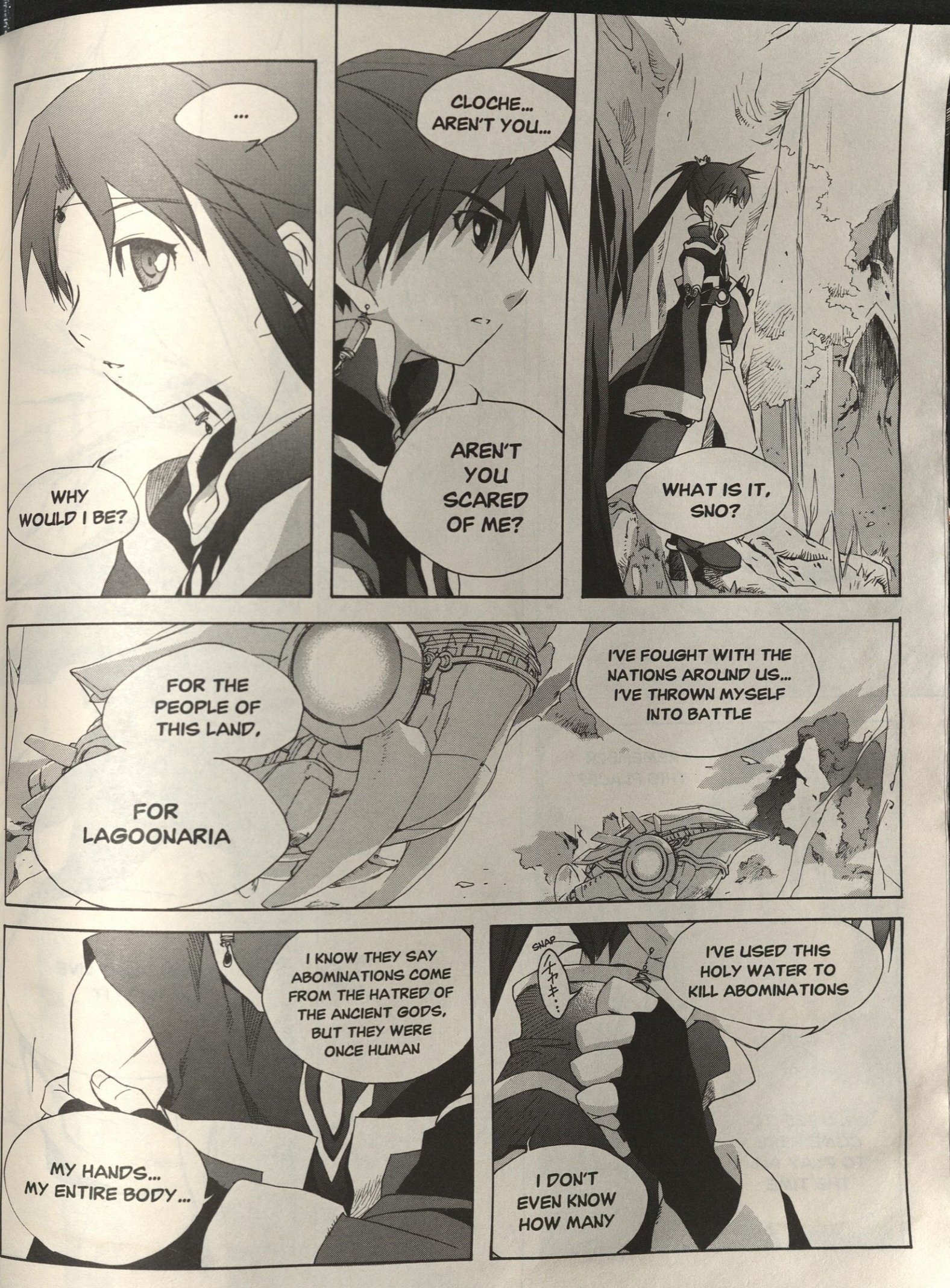

THE ONLY THING WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN
IS THAT EVERY BOAT WILL SOMEDAY SINK
SO WE CAN'T JUST SIT STILL
AND THAT'S WHY WE KEEP SAILING ON, RIGHT CLOCHE?
ALL WE CAN DO IS
JUST KEEP CLOSE TO OTHERS AS WE SAIL


THINK OF IT LIKE THIS. WE EACH HAVE A VESSEL THAT CARRIES US THROUGH LIFE.
SOME ARE BIG AND STABLE, AND OTHERS ARE SMALL AND RICKETY...
SOME ARE ALWAYS IN DISREPAIR AND NEVER REACH THEIR DESTINATION
IF A FRIEND'S BOAT IS SINKING,
WE CAN REACH OUT TO THEM AND TRY TO KEEP THEM ABOVE WATER
BUT WE CAN'T OFFER THEM A RIDE ON OUR BOAT-EACH BOAT ONLY HOLDS ONE


THE FLAMES OF THE GODS BURN INSIDE BOTH OF US
WHEN I BECOME A WOMAN, MY ROLE WILL BE TO PASS THE FLAMES TO THE NEXT GENERATION
YOUR ROLE IS TO USE THOSE FLAMES TO ILLUMINATE
BUT YOU...
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE FIGHTING, SNO
REMEMBER THAT


SNO
FWIP
I GUESS THAT'S THE PATH YOU'VE CHOSEN
THE PATH OF DUTY THAT MAY COST YOU YOUR LIFE
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE THE SAME KINDHEARTED LITTLE SISTER I LOVE.
THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE, SNO.
YEAH...
I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT...THE LAST OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SWORD, THE LAST TO BEAR THE MARK OF KINGLINESS

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER FELT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MY DUTY QUITE SO STRONGLY
I'M COVERED IN BLOOD
SCARE MYSELF
I EVEN...

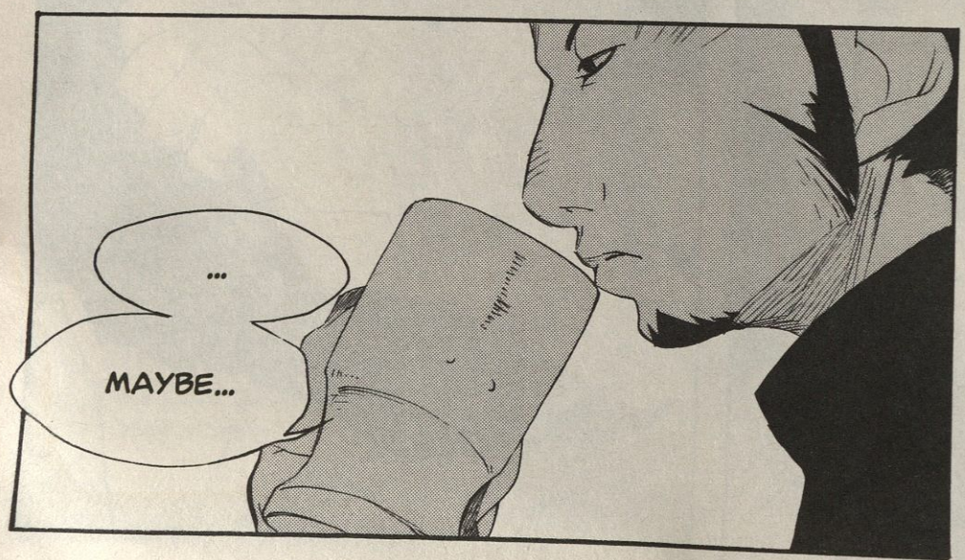

...
WHY WOULD I BE?
CLOCHE... AREN'T YOU...
AREN'T YOU SCARED OF ME?
WHAT IS IT, SNO?
FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS LAND,
FOR LAGOONARIA
I'VE FOUGHT WITH THE NATIONS AROUND US... I'VE THROWN MYSELF INTO BATTLE
I KNOW THEY SAY ABOMINATIONS COME FROM THE HATRED OF THE ANCIENT GODS, BUT THEY WERE ONCE HUMAN
MY HANDS... MY ENTIRE BODY...
SNAP
チャキ...
I'VE USED THIS HOLY WATER TO KILL ABOMINATIONS
I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW MANY

REMEMBER THIS PLACE?
WE USED TO COME HERE TO PLAY ALL THE TIME
YOU JUST LIVE WITH IT

CLICK
EVERYONE HAS A NIGHTMARE OR TWO
CREAK
AND SOME OF THOSE NIGHTMARES NEVER QUITE LEAVE
THWP

MAN, I JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!
THAT JUNK HE HAD ME CARRYING WAS SO HEAVY I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA BREAK MY BACK! AND THE OLD BASTARD DIDN'T LIFT A FINGER!

Luguit: a common, easy-drinking Lagoonarian liquor



SPEAKING OF THE COMMANDER, FROM WHAT I HEARD, HE'S NOT ACTUALLY FROM LAGOONARIA
CLONK
HE CAME HERE ALONE
YOU KNOW, THERE'S A RUMOR HE WAS THE ONE
WHO TAUGHT THE SCION HOW TO FIGHT WITH A SWORD
NO WAY!
HE'S GOTTA BE LIKE UNBEATABLE OR SOMETHING!
JOINED UP WHEN HE WAS 16 OR 17. EVEN BACK THEN HE WAS GOOD WITH A SWORD.
I MEAN REALLY GOOD.
DON'T KNOW WHERE FROM
YOU SOUND LIKE A COUPLE OF GIRLS
NOW HOW LONG YOU TWO GONNA SIT AROUND GOSSIPING?

...OR NOT.
THE COMMANDER KICKS ASS ON THE BATTLEFIELD
BUT HE WON'T EVEN HAVE A DRINK WITH US IN REAL LIFE
PLUNK
HE JUST WON'T HAVE A DRINK WITH YOU, LUGO
YOU'RE NOT HIS TYPE. YOU'LL BE OUT OF HERE BEFORE LONG, JUST WAIT AND SEE.
WHAP!
HEY...!
LIKE HELL! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S ALWAYS GETTING IN HIS WAY, DUMBASS!!
COME TO THINK OF IT, I'M ALWAYS BLOWN AWAY WHENEVER I SEE THE SCION UP THERE LEADING THE CHARGE, SLICING THROUGH EVERYTHING IN SIGHT...
BUT YOU KNOW, THE COMMANDER'S PRETTY BADASS, TOO
PARDON ME?!
YOU HEARD ME, DUMBASS
DIE AWAY, KIDDO
PANT
MASTER, THIS IS REALLY, REALLY HEAVY! I'M DYING HERE...
HUFF
HUFF
PANT

MURMUR
MURMUR
HUH?!
CHATTER
MUMBLE
MURMUR
RUSTLE
MURMUR
HEY, COMMANDER! COME HAVE A DRINK WITH US!
KA-CLUNK
COMMANDER!

YUKIRU SUGISAKI

# Yami to Boushi to Hon no Tabibito

Score. V

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THE SCI-FI MASTERPIECE FROM THE MIND OF TATSUO SATO

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### Koi Kaze

It or[illegible]ook one date for K[illegible]ro and Nanok[illegible] fall in love. Then the[illegible]ound out their love [illegible] forbidden...

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geneon

CLAMP ARTIST SATSUKI IGARASHI'S CHIPMUNK CHEEKS

# Moving

Illustrated by CLAMP

**THIS HAS TURNED** into a busy season for me. Last year ended just like every other year has lately—in a ferocious and frenzied mad dash! That time-honored tradition of pushing our print deadlines up for the end-of-year holidays caught up to us once again. (Does that even count as a tradition?!)

So that's why we moved the other day. I thought of it as sort of a warm-up for the transitions to come in the new year ahead. When I say "moved," I actually mean that we moved our workspace down the street. But it was still hard, because I was trying to finish a manuscript during the bustle. *Then* I came down with a cold! It was simply terrible because I couldn't get a lick of rest, physically or emotionally. My health eventually returned, and I was finally able to unpack, settle down and dig into some work again. But of course, I'm still not exactly sure where a few of my things are, so when I need them, I have to forage around the room ruffling through drawers and scattering shelves until I find them!

It reminds me of the time we all moved to Tokyo the year we debuted as CLAMP. Our first place happened to be in Ikebukuro, and we could look right out the window and see the impressive Sunshine Building nearby. The apartment was a tiny little place. It had a dining room, but the dining area was actually full of desks, and all six (that's right, six!) of us slept in the sleeping quarters. We slept two in the Western-style room and four in the Japanese-style room, but by far the most comfortable spot to sleep was in the closet after we took the futons out! (Mokona got that one...) We stayed in that place for about a year, and after that we moved around quite a bit. (So far, we've moved six times in 15 years. Do you think that's a lot?) Usually when we've moved in the past, it's been for a practical reason, like we needed to if we wanted to work more efficiently, but this most recent time was for a different purpose. This was our attempt to keep our work life and private life more separate than they have been in the past. I know there are good reasons why things are the way they are, and to some extent there's nothing we can do, but still...basically, we just wanted to escape this pattern of being woken up by work-related calls in the middle of the night or the bike messenger pounding on the door every time we finally manage to get to sleep!

As you may have guessed, ever since we started doing this, our workspace and private space have been one and the same, and this latest move marks the first time they've ever been separate. It also means we're officially going to be "commuters" starting this year! It's just a ten-minute walk to the office, but that still counts as a commute. For the last 15 years, work has always been just on the other side of the door. I haven't had to *go* somewhere every day since I was in school, so it feels like a different life, almost. Every day seems so fresh and new. It's amazing how your perspective can change. Having to go to school every single day always seemed like such a hassle, but you know, with the passage of time, you can really learn to enjoy things like that, and now I find myself happily trotting to work every morning. (One problem, however, is that I have to cut through the shopping arcade. This means daily temptation from fast-food places and convenience stores and Starbucks! Sadly, I'm not very good at resisting such things...) By the way, our new office was coordinated by an interior decorator one of our friends introduced us to, and it looks really cool! Now I have total bragging rights! [grin]

So that's it. New year, new office...I feel like a new woman, and I'm ready to work harder than ever! Don't forget CLAMP in 2005!

Satsuki Igarashi is part of the all-girl artist team CLAMP ***(CLAMP in Wonderland, X, Cardcaptor Sakura, Chobits, Angelic Layer)***. More than 15 years ago, a group of ten people started making dojinshi (self-published comics), and CLAMP formed from those members in the early 1990s. The current CLAMP has four members—Ageha Ohkawa, Tsubaki Nekoi, Mokona and Satsuki Igarashi. They have worked together to produce top-selling manga and anime, as well as illustrations for books, DVDs, videotapes, CDs, LDs and software. Igarashi was born Feb. 8 and comes from Kyoto, Japan. Visit CLAMP's official site at http://www.clamp-net.com/main.html.

GILLES POITRAS' BELOW THE SURFACE

# Dressed like the dead

**THE TERM *WAFUKU*** means traditional Japanese clothing—kimonos, *yukata* robes, traditional sandals, etc. While anime fans may not know the terminology for each piece of clothing, some of them wear wafuku while cosplaying. There's one problem: Many fans who wear traditional clothing accidentally *dress like they're dead*. What do I mean? You see, there is a proper way to wear traditional Japanese clothes; you always fold the left side over the right side. Folding it right over left is the style for dressing a corpse. Many experienced cosplayers innocently make this mistake. At Fanime 2004, I stopped a beautiful young woman and asked if she was dressed as a zombie. Before you think I was being an elitist snob, let me explain—this was someone who puts a lot of time and energy into her costuming, so I felt comfortable informing her of the problem. I wouldn't normally be so bold as to correct others like this. Consider this month's column an attempt to correct this problem among anime fans.

Of course the Japanese usually politely ignore such errors. However, this fashion faux pas hasn't escaped the creators of anime, and it's sometimes used as an inside joke. For example, in Episode 17 of ***City Hunter 2***, Misa, who is visiting Japan, folds her yukata in the wrong manner. Such an error is always good for a laugh when the audience catches it.

With manga, this becomes a problem when the images are flipped so the book can be read in the Western left-to-right style, a practice that used to be more common than it is today. It was not unusual, then, for everyone wearing traditional clothing to have the fold wrong. Luckily, not all flipped manga has this problem. Take a look at Dark Horse's ***Blade of the Immortal***, and you will see that the images were carefully adjusted to avoid this error. But they didn't do the same with ***Lone Wolf and Cub*** or ***Samurai Executioner***, both of which suffer from zombie-clothing syndrome.

A Japanese reporter I know has told me that she gets rather creeped out when she reads flipped English translated manga with the clothes on wrong. But a savvy cosplayer can easily take advantage of this and dress up as a zombie with the clothes property folded right over left. Those who know will admire the attention to detail, and those who don't will appreciate the other aspects of the costume.

Knowing about this particular cultural detail can also be useful when looking at photographs of Japan. While it is not as much of a problem with digital cameras, in the days of film photography, a print would occasionally be made with the image reversed as if looking at it in a mirror. So you could quickly check for the proper folding of the clothing and point out, "Hey, this picture's backward!"

One final detail for young women wearing traditional kimonos: The fancier dress kimono is so tight around the waist that it's usually worn without underwear to prevent unsightly lines. As anyone who has seen Episode 1 of ***Ai Yori Aoshi*** knows, there's a way around this—simply wear high-cut underwear.

After San Francisco Bay Area resident Gilles-the-Librarian completed his second Masters degree, he decided to not read much unless the book had plenty of pictures. Actually, he reads a lot about Japan and has written two books on anime: ***The Anime Companion*** and ***Anime Essentials***. Currently, his free time is devoted to researching more about anime, manga and Japanese culture. He also maintains an anime related website at **www.koyagi.com** and watches local subtitled Japanese TV when not viewing anime.

AMOS WONG'S POSTCARDS FROM JAPAN

# Rollerballs

**"WHAT'S THE MOST** you've ever won at pachinko?" I ask my *NTUSA* colleague Miyuki after we finish up an interview in Shibuya.

"40,000 yen from 1,000 yen," she replies (that's almost $400 from 10 bucks), "but that was just once."

The hugely popular "leisure" pastime may bring in a considerable sum for a lucky few, but it's hardly riveting to play: a combination of slot machine and pinball—only more tedious than the former and less interactive than the latter. You buy a handful of tiny silver balls, shoot them into the unit by turning a dial, and passively watch them cascade down. *If* they fall into a slot, an LCD screen in the center of the unit launches into a slots-like game; if you get matching numbers, you win more balls. They're later exchanged for goods (a tenant in my apartment recently brought home a mountain bike) or cash from a teller window near the establishment.

The gameplay is slightly livened up by various gimmicks, which include a myriad of anime tie-ins. A friend once proudly showed me a ***Dirty Pair*** pachinko machine he'd bought second-hand, and lately, ***Evangelion*** and ***Onimusha 3*** machines have hit the parlors. The one that caught my eye is ***Daiyamato 2***, Leiji Matsumoto's sequel to the classic ***Space Battleship Yamato***. The redesigned iconic battle cruiser looks like it collided with the *USS Enterprise's* dish section and swiped the wings off Captain Harlock's vessel, the *Arcadia*. It's an interesting look.

I suggest to Miyuki that we play a round of ***Daiyamato 2*** for this month's column and split the cash if we win. Upon arriving in the smoky haze and cacophony of a small pachinko parlor, we spot two rows of the machine, which seems to be popular with patrons. A lucky player hits the jackpot, and a CG clip on the LCD screen shows a squadron of Space Zero fighters launching from Daiyamato and attacking a snake-like battle cruiser. During another sequence, the player is prompted to push a button to fire the ship's cannons at the winning numbers. The unit itself is adorned with a row of swiveling cannons above the screen, and the ship's front section is molded into the playfield's right side.

We buy a 1,000 yen card, insert it into an unoccupied machine, and the balls tumble into the tray section, ready for launch. A mere few minutes later, it's all over, with no CG movies or jackpot. Later, I try again at an establishment near my place, get the same underwhelming result and decide to call it quits.

Some experts reportedly make a month's wages from playing pachinko; obviously I've still got a long way to go.

It's not all bad though: Sipping a beverage in the snack section, I spot a vending machine selling spaghetti bolognese and fried rice. The text on the machine reads: "CASUAL FROZEN FOODS, 24hr. HOT MENU." Mmm, sounds *tasty*.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMOS WONG

Amos Wong left Sydney for Tokyo in 1999 ostensibly for a year's working holiday, but he somehow never managed to return. Segueing into publishing via graphic design, he has written about video games and anime in various publications including *The Official Australian PlayStation Magazine*, *The Official UK PlayStation 2 Magazine*, *Manga Max* and of course *Newtype USA*.

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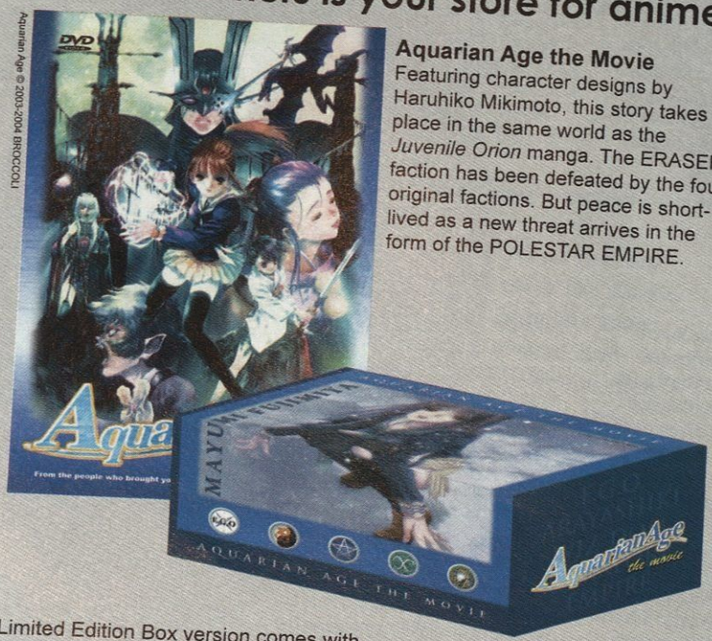


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SCRIPTWRITER [illegible]SUKE KURODA'S TEN YEARS GONE

# Puni Puni Poemy

**THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:** [illegible]ittle show called *Puni Puni Poemy*. It [illegible]rted out as a brain-fart for a fictitious anime that popped out during the production of *Excel Saga*, and it would've ended that way if it hadn't been for Shigeru Kitayama, the (in)famous producer from Victor Entertainment who suggested we actually turn it into a *real* OVA.

*Puni Puni Poemy* is basically a gag project hatched from a parody, but hey, you don't get that many chances to do original shows in today's anime industry (which pumps out an *awful* lot of remakes based on manga titles). Keeping that in mind, the main staff from ***Excel Saga*** was more than ready to reorganize and hop on board for another round of wacky wildness, and wacky wildness is what we got. This is one *deviant* film.

Let me put it into perspective for you: The show had *no* theme and *no* philosophy. You know all that meaningful stuff you're supposed to put into a film? Yeah, well...there is none of that. The show is utterly cracked, plain and simple, the most ludicrous waste of time and resources you can imagine. But we used this as fuel for the fire, telling ourselves that no one besides us would be willing to go to such lengths to produce a show like that. In our minds, we were *elites*. Putting it in ***Ideon*** terms, we felt like Jordan Bes rushing headlong through the Buff Clan assault, figuring we'd already been dealt so much damage, the only thing left for us was to go for the pinpoint attack! And our "pinpoint" focus must've been knocked off-kilter somewhere...

But leaving aside for the moment the darkly self-[illegible]recating conversations we had when we asked ourselves who in God's name would actually shell out the beans to buy the show, I can personally say that the experience was an invariably good time. I'm not ashamed to admit to my own repeated viewing of the film even recently. I'm sure if you asked the rest of the staff, a lot of them would say the same thing.

Here's why. As I sit here thinking back on the show, I have to say it had a rare breed of raw *anime* appeal. By "anime," I mean animation in a fundamental sense—moving pictures. You've simply never seen pictures move like this before, never mind that the *content* is over-the-top obscene and moronic! Of course, I wouldn't be surprised if there are people out there who refuse to recognize the show as a work of art—even *anime* art—and believe me, I understand that point of view. There were probably even staff members who had negative reactions to working on it. Even so, I think the show has an undeniable draw. After all, it's not everyday that a group of creators gets to work on something with such complete freedom.

And I guess in the end, that's something I hope everyone can appreciate about the film. We were able to explore unprecedented levels of creative freedom, and I think that shines through in the finished product. After all, it's one thing to work on an anime with creative constraints, but it's another story when one has the kind of unbridled freedom we had on ***PPP***. Looking back on it now, I think what we were really doing was wrestling with the very concept of freedom as creators. That's my two cents, anyway.

illustrated by SAKURAGI YUYA

Yosuke Kuroda is a prolific novelist and scriptwriter for anime and manga. Born in Mie in 1968, his first big break came in 1994 with the ***Tenchi Muyo! Ryo-Ohki*** OVA series. Since then he's lent his scriptwriting talents to numerous big-name projects, including ***Trigun***, ***Infinite Ryvius***, ***Excel Saga***, ***s-CRY-ed***, ***Please Teacher!***, and most recently, ***Yumeria***. With a very vocal fan following, Kuroda is one of the most talked-about anime scriptwriters of today. He's also the CEO of Studio Orphee.

JONATHAN CLEMENTS' LIVING MANGA

# Revenge tragedies

**IN THE** [illegible]90 manga ***Emblem Take Two***, a gangster is betrayed and left for dead. He is then magically transported ten years into his own past, ready to live his life again. Since he knows who will betray him at some point, he indulges in a little preemptive revenge. ***Emblem Take Two*** was adapted into an anime in 1993, inspiring its own cycle of imitators. By 1997, Japanese TV had ***Gift***, in which an amnesiac courier tried to piece together his former criminal life. In the manga world, we had ***Old Boy***, an eight-volume story written by Garon Tsuchiya and illustrated by Nobuaki Minegishi.

Minegishi's other works include the epic mah-jongg manga ***Tenpai***, the gangster quest ***Teppen*** and the surreal ***Jungle***, in which a mah-jongg player's road to success is framed as a martial arts drama. It is ***Old Boy***, however, that made his name internationally. ***Old Boy*** puts the plotting of ***Emblem Take Two*** into reverse. An average guy is kidnapped and held in solitary confinement, only to be released after ten years, with no knowledge of his captors' identities or motives. The lone clue he has is the taste of the fried *gyoza* dumplings he survived on. His only advantage is his steely resolve, built up through a decade of brooding.

***Old Boy*** refashioned ***Emblem Take Two*** in a darker, more linear fashion, ditching the time-travel gimmick in favor of its depressingly mundane counterpart—simply getting older. It gained a small fan following, particularly in Korea, where hard-boiled manga for middle-aged men find a ready audience. A copy found its way to producer Kim Dong-Joo, who snapped up the rights for a mere $10,000. He handed the project to Park Chan-Wook, a director whose ***Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance*** made him a master of the revenge tragedy.

"I appreciate Japanese comics," Park says, "but I was never a major fan. I read it at first without any plan of turning it into a movie. When the producer came to me with the manga rights, I had to reread it from a different angle. The *motive* in the movie is totally different. The common points remaining are the privately run prison and the fact that the antagonist does not really make any attempt to hide himself."

Park's live-action movie adaptation of ***Old Boy*** drags the story into the 21st century. Incarcerated for 15 years (not ten), his anti-hero Oh Dae-su marks time by watching the news on TV in his cell. He sees the results of the Korean election, the funeral of Princess Diana, and the reports of his wife's murder, with his own blood and fingerprints planted at the scene by his anonymous captors. When he gets out, his tormentor Evergreen (Yoo Ji-Tae) gives him five days to discover *why* he has been treated so badly. If he gets it right, Evergreen will kill himself. If he gets it wrong, Evergreen will kill every woman Oh Dae-su has ever loved...

***Old Boy's*** biggest fan was Quentin Tarantino, who awarded it the Grand Prix du Jury at the Cannes Film Festival. This living manga received a 15-minute standing ovation. "I used to think that the Cannes dress code was ridiculous," Park told *Sight and Sound* magazine, "until I saw all those people in black ties standing up and applauding. It felt ten times better than if they were wearing T-shirts."

Jonathan Clements has translated over 70 anime and manga, including ***Ironfist Chinmi***, ***Street Fighter II*** and ***Slow Step***. He has also been a voice actor, dubbing director and scriptwriter, most recently on audio dramas for ***Judge Dredd***, ***Strontium Dog*** and ***Doctor Who***. He is the co-author of the ***Anime Encyclopedia*** and the ***Dorama Encyclopedia: A Guide to Japanese TV Drama Since 1953***.

MASAHIKO ITO, NEWTYPE JAPAN EDITOR

# The timeless "transformation"!

EACH MONTH, THE EDITORS OF *NEWTYPE* JAPAN, *KOREA* AND *USA* PICK A TOPIC AND WRITE ABOUT IT FROM THEIR COUNTRY'S PERSPECTIVE. THESE COLUMNS ARE THEN PRINTED IN THE OTHER COUNTRIES' EDITIONS.

**THIS MONTH: CLASSIC ANIME**

**WHEN I THINK** about "classic" anime—stuff that was made more than ten years ago and captured the attention of a generation of fans—the first titles that come to mind are shows like ***Cutey Honey*** and ***Casshan: Robot Hunter***. But honestly...it's a little bit hard to remember what came out back then when you consider the anime climate in today's Japan—new DVDs come out at the rate of more than 150 each month, and more than 100 anime shows light up our TV screens each week. So it's hard to get excited about decades-old anime shows when we're barely able to keep up with the new stuff.

In fact, come to think of it, the only reason I thought of ***Cutey Honey*** and ***Casshan*** in the first place is because last year we had new theatrical remakes of both shows. In fact, that happened a lot last year. First there was ***Cutie Honey*** (based on 1973's ***Cutey Honey***, and yes, spelled differently), then ***CASSHERN*** (from 1973's ***Casshan*** and also spelled differently) and of course ***Devilman*** (from 1972 and spelled...the same). Whether or not you're an anime fan, if you were in Japan last year, you couldn't *help* but hear about these films on TV or read about them in magazines.

Why, out of all the classic anime to choose from, did the focus land on *these* titles? In my estimation, the answer is simple—transformation!

Before we go any further, let me voice a caveat. Not all of last year's live-action remakes fall into this category. For instance, ***NIN x NIN Ninja Hattori-kun THE MOVIE*** didn't involve the beloved main character Hattori-kun transforming into anything special. But ***Cutie Honey***? Yep. ***Devilman***? Yep. Even in ***CASSHERN***, the main character dies and then comes back as a superhero...that's a kind of transformation, right? Sure, why not. And now that I think about it, even the popular live-action TV version of ***Sailor Moon*** is all about transformation.

This transformation concept isn't limited to the old school of anime. Everyone gets fed up with their real selves once in a while. "It wasn't supposed to be like this," or "I should've done better than that," etc. You know the feeling, right? I have thoughts like that every single day...(sniff, sniff). However self-serving it may be, we still love a good story about an ordinary Joe (or Jane) who transforms into a superhero and topples villains. And why wouldn't we? It's an ideal story for a far-from-ideal world where we mortals are forced to beat our heads against the brick wall of reality on a daily basis. Transformed heroes get *respect*—not just in Japan and not just in anime. Even Ultraman and Kamen Rider, the two pillars of Japanese live-action, are transforming heroes. And think of Superman or Spider-Man. If those guys aren't "transforming," I don't know who is!

Transformation is exactly why those old shows are still kicking around. They've got a timeless appeal that makes them perfect for live-action remakes. After all, when it comes to seeing our heroes transform, the more realistic the better!

IK-HWAN KIM, NEWTYPE KOREA EDITOR

# Is there still room for the classics?

**FOR A LONG TIME,** anime and other Japanese cultural imports were restricted in Korea. Nevertheless, there are some Koreans who know about classic anime and like it. The restrictions placed on it meant that most who watched classic shows during that time had no idea that what they were watching had been produced in Japan. They just liked it because they liked it. And even after learning that it wasn't made in Korea, they still like it.

With the advent of the DVD, the anime of the past is coming back. Probably the most representative example is Hayao Miyazaki's 1978 classic ***Mirai Shonen Conan*** (known in the US as ***Future Boy Conan***). This show was an unexpectedly huge hit back in the day, and its successful DVD release was followed up by DVD releases of other once-popular shows like 1973's ***Kerokko Demetan*** (later released in the US in considerably edited form as ***The Brave Frog***) and Nippon Animation's 1979 animated version of ***Anne of Green Gables*** (titled ***Akage no Anne*** in Japan).

What these shows have in common is their wholesome message and uncontroversial content, which enabled them to slip past the conservative Korean censors and stay a part of the public's memory for a long time. But Korea's hardcore anime fans prefer something a bit different. The anime *they* like watching are things like the ***Gundam*** series, shows whose popularity is firmly entrenched in the anime fandom of Japan as well.

However, another group of shows lies between the hits of yesteryear and the latest, greatest new anime shows loved by the hardcore fans. I would call them "semi-classics," although in Korea their position is tenuous at best. Take for instance ***Urusei Yatsura***, a remarkable show from the golden age of Japanese animation. In places like the US and Western Europe, some of the ***Urusei Yatsura*** movies are considered to be some of ***Ghost in the Shell*** director Mamoru Oshii's greatest early masterpieces, but the films and the series itself is almost completely unknown in Korea, even among those who pride themselves on being fans of Oshii's work.

In a sense, the position of shows like ***Urusei Yatsura*** mirrors that of the older anime fans who find themselves sitting on the outside of the core fan communities—a distant memory. I hope the day will come when Korean fans will be able to see some of those great and memorable older shows like ***Urusei Yatsura*** and ***Kimagure Orange Road***, which once resonated in the hearts of the founding fathers of Korean anime fandom.

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UK ROUNDUP

# The currency of anime

**IT'S BEEN SEVERAL MONTHS** since we first reported on Revolver Entertainment's efforts to become the "number-one company on the UK anime scene." The distributor has finally put its cards on the table with its first release, Image Entertainment's CG anime *Galerians*. This won't be the first time a new player has charged in, announcing great intentions, only to buy an American release off the shelf. But who can blame them? After all, that's what everyone else in the UK does—Artsmagic's *Blue Remains* was the last anime to reach the UK *before* the US, and that was some time ago.

It is a common trend in UK anime to drift toward the American money. American companies have more clout, get sweeter deals from the Japanese, and are better equipped to initiate their own translations. It takes foresight and finance for a British company to do anything except wait for American deliveries. At the moment, thanks to the weak dollar, the Americans also have bargain-basement deals to offer the British. Why make a new anime translation when American productions are suddenly one-fifth cheaper?

Dollars are the currency of the international film business, and right now the pound buys a lot more of them. While distributors cash in on cheaper titles and UK tourists flock to Florida for shopping deals, British fans benefit from their increased financial power. The lure of international online ordering has even prompted one local retailer, United Publications, to drop its import prices by 20%.

As for what's on offer this month, Manga Entertainment's provisional release schedule, unconfirmed as we go to press, has the fourth part of ***Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*** slated for March, alongside two additions from the company's bargain-priced "Collection"—***Grappler Baki*** and ***Zeoraima: Project Hades***. Meanwhile, MVM has two premieres, the first volumes of ***Gungrave*** and the long-awaited ***Haibane Renmei***, as well as ***Adventures of Mini-Goddess*** Volume 2, ***Yu Yu Hakusho*** Volume 2 and the eighth volume of ***Kiddy Grade***.

Anime remains sadly absent from the Sci Fi channel, its one-time champion. Instead, viewers get the ***Fist of the North Star*** live-action movie, ironically in a month that sees ADV UK's release of the first part of the ***New Fist of the North Star*** anime. ADV's other releases include ***Evangelion Platinum*** Volume 2, ***Last Exile*** Volume 3, ***Kino's Journey*** Volume 4, ***Azumanga Daioh*** Volume 5 and the final volume of ***Angelic Layer***.

In the live-action world, Momentum Asia surprised everyone with a theatrical release of Kazuaki Kiriya's low-budget, high-aiming ***Casshern***, based on the obscure 1973 anime series ***Casshan: Robot Hunter***. It'll be out on DVD shortly after. The UK also gets a DVD release of ***Old Boy***, the manga-based revenge movie from Korea (see this month's Living Manga column), in a two-disc special edition courtesy of distributor Tartan. Tartan's UK disc comes several months ahead of ***Old Boy's*** American release, which is a nice change in an era when America seems to get almost everything first.

*—Jonathan Clements*

**It is a common trend in UK anime to drift toward the American money. American companies have more clout, get sweeter deals from the Japanese, and are better equipped to initiate their own translations.**

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AUSSIE ROUNDUP

# The East heads west for an anime first

**MANY OF YOU** are probably wondering about the status of Japanime 05, scheduled for March. I'm afraid you'll have to remain in a state of suspended anticipation a while longer as this popular event is experiencing some organizational flux. Stay tuned for future developments.

Meanwhile, otaku on the west coast who have been long deprived of their own anime happening banded together to launch WAI-Con, the first-ever Western Australian anime convention last December. Taking a page from the playbook of Sydney's Animania, the organizers put the event on professional footing, and, having built it, the fans and traders came. Held at the University of WA on December 11-12, over 700 people attended, outstripping expectations and firmly putting a new Aussie anime con on the calendar. WAI-Con president Justin Bairstow is planning a bigger and better show in late 2005. For more info, visit www.wai-con.org.

Madman's March releases offer some comfort for Japanime's delayed arrival with a host of anime's finest vying for your hard-earned cash. First up, the series that garnered the third spot on *Newtype USA's* top 25 hit parade, Rumiko Takahashi's supernatural TV saga, ***InuYasha***. Madman is wisely releasing the first three volumes simultaneously to get a head start on the 150+ episode series. Further feudal swordfights, albeit with a more radical edge, can be enjoyed in ***Samurai Champloo***, which boasts the talents of Shinichiro Watanabe (***Cowboy Bebop***), Kazuto Nakazawa (***Kill Bill***), Kazuki Akane (***Escaflowne***) and Shuko Murase (***Witch Hunter Robin***). Its collector's box comes with a samurai bandana, but a complimentary eye patch is conspicuously missing from the ***Captain Herlock The Legend Returns*** Volume 1 collector's box. The revival of this anime icon also marks the first collaboration between Leiji Matsumoto (***Star Blazers***) and Rin Taro (***Metropolis***) since the original 1970s TV series, and features scripts by Sadayuki Murai (***Perfect Blue***), character designs by Nobuteru Yuuki (***Escaflowne***) and production by MADHOUSE (***Chobits***).

On the live-action front, Eastern Eye unleashes ***Godzilla vs. Megaguirus***, which takes place in a parallel modern Japan where a government-sponsored anti-Godzilla strike team, the G-Graspers, has developed a space-borne weapon designed to destroy the Big G by firing a mini-black hole at him...nuff said! Also out is the film that put Takeshi Kitano on the beat, ***Violent Cop***, and the retail version of Park Chan-Wook's South Korean box-office smash ***JSA: Joint Area Security***.

Other big news from Eastern Eye is that they've snapped up a few of Toho's remastered Zatoichi classics, sharing the long-running movie series with Siren, while adding their own artwork and extras. EE's Zatoichi kicks off with ***The Festival of Fire***, ***Zatoichi Meets the One-Armed Swordsman*** and the must-see showdown ***Zatoichi meets Yojimbo***, starring the inimitable Toshiro Mifune.

And last, but certainly not least, Prachya Pinkaew's sizzling Muay Thai epic ***Ong Bak***, starring martial arts maestro Tony Jaa, hits the big screen nationwide on March 10, so Australia can finally see for itself what the rest of the world was so excited about in 2004.

*—Cefn Ridout*

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# The Ring Two

## DIRECTOR HIDEO NAKATA TALKS ABOUT THE SEQUEL WITH NEWTYPE USA

**IN 2002, *THE RING*** (based on the Japanese film ***Ringu***) scared the heck out of American moviegoers, ushering in a fascination with Japanese horror that led to remakes of the films *Ju-On* (as ***The Grudge***) and ***Dark Water***. Original ***Ringu*** director Hideo Nakata is stepping into the director's chair this time around to continue the story in the sequel to ***The Ring***. Six months have passed since Rachel Keller (Naomi Watts) and her son Aidan (David Dorfman) escaped the terror of Samara and the infamous tape. But her ordeal is not quite over yet, and the curse reemerges, forcing Rachel to continue her investigation.

*Newtype USA* sat down with director Nakata to ask a few questions about ***The Ring Two***, in theaters March 18, and his future projects.

### How does it feel to be working on *The Ring* again?

[Laughs]. It's very strange, and a little bit funny. It's like my destiny. Honestly speaking, I'm not a horror fan as a moviegoer or as a filmmaker. As a filmmaker, I always want to make a straight drama, a melodrama or even a love story [laughs]. But funnily enough, at the crucial moments of my career, I have always directed horror movies. My directorial debut was a TV horror drama, and my first feature film was a horror flick called ***Ghost Actress***. My first big-budget movie was ***Ringu***, and my first American movie became ***The Ring***. When I came here to find my first US project, I kept saying, "I don't want to make a horror movie," because I honestly didn't want it to be compared with [the American remake] ***The Ring***. But last year I decided to make ***The Ring Two***, so inevitably it *will* be compared with that film [laughs].

### What kind of change or influence did you bring to the script?

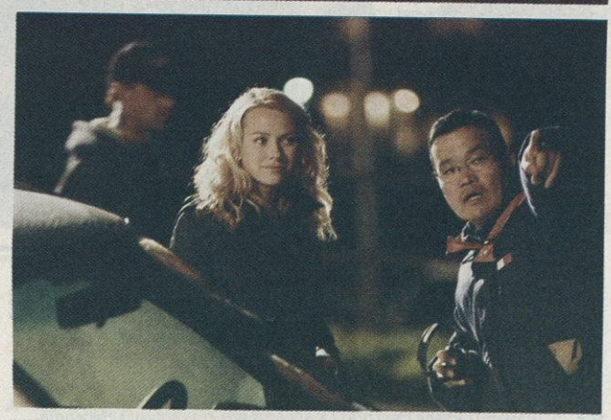
Well I won't comment on specifics, but Rachel has to face Samara again. She left Seattle, and now she lives in a small town in Oregon, but of course Samara comes back. And Rachel has to be much stronger than in the previous movie, in a more terrible way. To confront Samara, she has to know more about Samara, so I asked [screenwriter Ehren Kruger] to work on Samara's background, her history. There were some important changes I wanted Ehren to work on, but I can't tell you exactly what.

### We understand that you already have two more projects lined up in the US.

Yes, that's correct. But I also have two potential projects back in Japan with [***Ringu*** producer] Taka Ichise. I'd say these are traditional Japanese ghost stories rather than modern horror. The script is ready for one of them, and for the other, a scriptwriter is still working on it. For the US projects, ***Out*** and a remake of ***The Entity*** (both of which are psychological thrillers), writers are now doing the scripts. I can't say which of these projects will be my next movie.

### Do you have any final comments for our readers?

Well, I'm making every effort to polish ***The Ring Two*** so that the movie can look as frightening as possible. It has a very simple yet very strong, frightening story. I don't think the film will disappoint fans of ***The Ring***, and even of my original movies. I hope it's going to be a very frightening and at the same time entertaining movie. And successful.



### » BIG IN JAPAN

Named one of *Time* magazine's most influential people of 2004, Japanese film director Hideo Nakata (above, right) is at the forefront of the current trend in Asian horror cinema. His Japanese film credits include ***Ringu***, ***Ringu 2*** and the internationally acclaimed ***Dark Water***. He makes his American directorial debut with ***The Ring Two***, in theaters this March.

Photos by Gemma La Mana

# Kyo Kara Maoh!

## ALL HAIL THE DARK LORD

**YURI SHIBUYA'S NOT HAVING** a good day. On his way home from school he sees a classmate getting picked on by a pack of bullies. He intervenes, but when their target runs off, the pack of rabble-rousers focuses their fury on Yuri, forcing him into the girls' restroom, where they stick his head in the toilet and flush. As it turns out, the porcelain receptacle is a gate to another world where Yuri is crowned the demon king. He seems to fit the description of a demon king perfectly—after all, he is clad in a black school uniform, and he has black hair and eyes (a rare occurrence in this new world, it seems). Is this for real, or is it some kind of hidden camera prank?

The first volume of *Kyo Kara Maoh!*, based on a series of Japanese novels by Tomo Takabayashi called ***Ma no Tsuku***, comes to the US on DVD via Geneon Entertainment on April 19. Volume 1 contains five episodes, just enough to get you settled in the demon kingdom and to familiarize you with the story. It's got a little something for everyone—a vaguely medieval setting, swords 'n' sorcery and a dash of shonen ai thrown in for the fangirls.

# Paranoia Agent / Samurai Champloo

## THE LATEST ADDITIONS TO ADULT SWIM

>> **SATOSHI KON'S CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED** anime series ***Paranoia Agent*** will soon join Shinichiro Watanabe's ***Samurai Champloo*** on US TV this summer as the latest additions to Adult Swim's Saturday night Action block on Cartoon Network. >> ***Paranoia Agent*** is a 13-episode psychological thriller where the police investigates a series of mysterious assaults perpetrated by a bat-wielding boy. At first it seems that the vicious attacks are random, but as the story unfolds, a pattern begins to emerge. Satoshi Kon's previous work includes the films ***Millennium Actress*** and ***Tokyo Godfathers***. >> ***Samurai Champloo*** follows disgruntled warriors Mugen and Jin and their female leader Fuu as they search for a samurai with the scent of sunflowers. Director Shinichiro Watanabe is perhaps best known in the West as the director of ***Cowboy Bebop***. >> Both shows are currently available on DVD in the US from Geneon Entertainment and have previously been picked as *Newtype USA*'s DVD of the Month.

Paranoia Agent

Samurai Champloo

# Fullmetal Alchemist

## GAME SEQUEL SLATED FOR SPRING

**IT HASN'T EVEN** been two months since Square Enix's PS2 role-playing game ***Fullmetal Alchemist and the Broken Angel*** came out, and they're already gearing up to release the sequel. ***Fullmetal Alchemist 2: Curse of the Crimson Elixir*** (also for PS2) is scheduled to ship to stores this spring, and though it may have the number two in the title, it's actually a *prequel* to ***Broken Angel***. The story takes place at the very beginning of the anime series. Ed and Al go to the desert city of Lior and fight the priest Cornello as they search for the Philosopher's Stone so they can get their bodies back to normal. But instead of heading back to Central right after, they depart to investigate a rash of mysterious disappearances that lead to the remote ruins of an ancient city.

The game builds upon the first by adding little tweaks to the attacks you can perform in battle. But the biggest change this time around is in the visual department. The 3D graphics of the original have been given the toon-shading treatment to make them look closer to the anime. We'll have more on ***Crimson Elixir*** next month. Until then, feel free to drool over these screenshots.

# Midori Days

## HE'S GOT THE PERFECT GIRL FOR A HAND

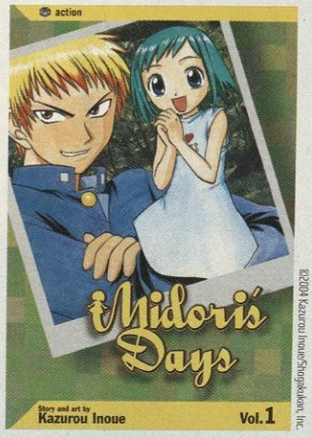
**MIDORI KASUGA JUST** wanted to be close to Seiji Sawamura just wanted a girlfriend and a normal high school existence. Somewhere in the middle, a higher power intervened and gave Midori and Seiji their wishes, but...not exactly in the ways they had hoped. And their rather (ahem) *interesting* relationship is chronicled in *Midori Days*, a series that originally ran on Japanese TV last year as *Midori no Hibi*.

First, an explanation. Seiji is what you'd call a delinquent, a thuggish guy with a powerful right hook—so powerful it's earned him the nickname "Mad Dog" Sawamura. But his tough 'tude is just for show. He's really just a big softy, and when he's not duking it out with a rival high school's gang, he's trying desperately to get girls to go out with him. But he's on an incredible losing streak—20 girls, and not one will agree to go on a date with poor Seiji. That's when he makes his wish—to get a normal girlfriend and not be alone through his high school days.

It just so happens that Midori has been watching Seiji, secretly pining away for him as he passes by her on the train platform. She wants to be near him but doesn't know how. That's when she makes her wish.

Then one day, they wake up...together. Problem is, Seiji's fierce right hand is now a miniature Midori! Though neither of them asked for this bizarre twist of fate, they've got to keep cool and act like nothing's out of the ordinary. Naturally, that gets difficult for Sawamura when his enemies, his sister or his classmates come calling. He's able to hide the young girl in bandages and pretend she's a hand puppet, but the truth's bound to come out at some point. Then there's the issue of Midori's actual body, which has fallen into a coma. Her mother and friends lie at her bedside, desperate to see her healthy again. But if she wakes up, she'll be separated from her beloved. What's a girl to do?

Media Blasters is bringing *Midori Days*, a delightfully funny romantic comedy, to the US on March 29. The first volume contains five episodes (of 13 total) and is available as either a standalone DVD or as a DVD with a collector's box to hold the rest of the series and a limited-edition T-shirt. But that's not all the *Midori* coming to the US. On May 15, the first volume (of eight) of Kazurou Inoue's original manga hits bookstore shelves from VIZ—under the slightly different moniker *Midori's Days*.

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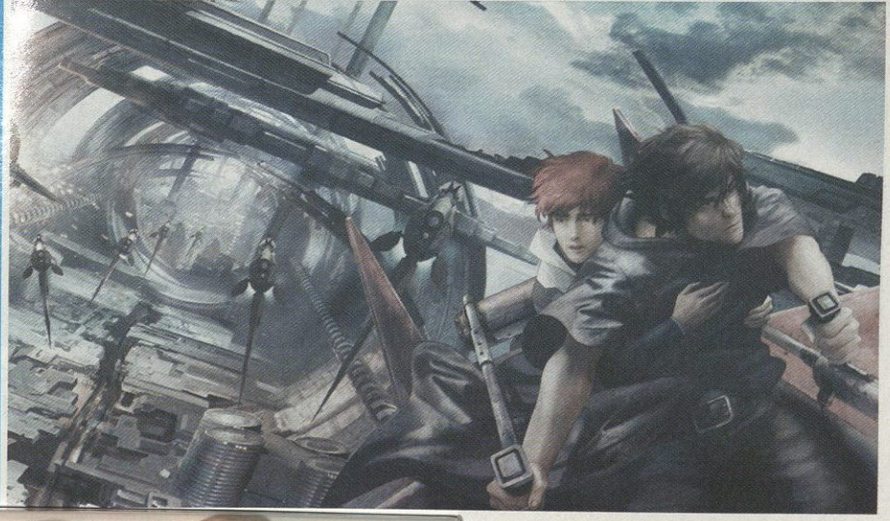

# Sky Blue

## KOREAN ANIMATED FILM OPENS IN US THEATERS

**AFTER A QUICK TITLE** change from *Wonderful Days* to *Sky Blue*, Moonsaeng Kim's Korean animated opus is coming to the US. And the best news is, it may already be playing in your area. The film is a sci-fi love story set in 2140, a time when the exploitation of natural resources has brought mankind to its knees. The surviving city of Ecoban is now seen as a haven, and many seek asylum there. Jay, one of the soldiers charged with guarding this utopia from outsiders, witnesses an industrial accident orchestrated by the city's corrupt government. She reunites with childhood friend Shua, and together they fight for the chance to once again behold a natural blue sky.

The film went into general release in the States on February 18 and is making its way across the country, playing in select cities. Check the official *Sky Blue* website, www.skybluethemovie.com, for a complete list of screening locations.

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# Yoshitaka Amano's Hero

## THE LEGENDARY ARTIST'S LATEST WORK COMES STATESIDE

**YOSHITAKA AMANO HAS BEEN** defying boundaries and creating pop icons for nearly four decades. He's crafted illustrations for popular anime, comics and video games and has displayed his masterful paintings in fine art galleries across the globe. Whether you're familiar with his early designs from ***Vampire Hunter D***, ***Gatchaman*** and the ***Final Fantasy*** game series, or you're a fan of his collaborations with some of the biggest names in anime, US comics and rock 'n' roll, you know that Amano's influence on otaku culture is profound. Despite his many accolades, he's never created his own graphic novel...until now.

This month, Amano will release his very first comic creation, ***Hero***, to an American audience courtesy of newly formed publisher Speakeasy Comics (info at www.speakeasy-comics.com). Chronicling the epic exploits of a man who will traverse the universe to find the woman who betrayed him, ***Hero*** is poised to be one of Amano's most poignant works to date. *Newtype USA* sat down with Amano to get the scoop.

### What is *Hero*?

***Hero*** is basically the story of a man who goes beyond time and space seeking his true identity.

### What were some of your influences on the work?

The original idea came to me when I was watching [a performance of] Wagner's ***Ring Cycle***. Myths from different countries and American superheroes gave me more ideas while I was working on it.

### How did this experience compare to working on a project for hire?

When I work on a pre-existing concept, I'm given a creative framework. In a way, it's easier for me. It's like giving flesh and blood to an existing bone structure. In the case of an original work like ***Hero***, I have to start with the bone structure itself. There's more freedom, but it's tougher at the same time. I've enjoyed it very much though.

### Do you consider the main character to be a traditional hero?

If you mean simply good guy against bad by "traditional hero," then Hero is not traditional. I wanted him to be a new type of character with real depth and soul.

### Why release this work in the US before Japan?

I started this project while I was in New York, and much of the work was done there. So it was very natural to release it in the US first.

### Do you live in New York right now?

I basically live in Japan, but I go back and forth quite often. I set up a studio in New York because I wanted to feel the air and vibe with my own skin. When I'm in Japan, I feel more covered by my past works, relationships and reputation. While in New York, I feel like my real self is more exposed...Plus, my Japanese publishers won't come after me for missed deadlines! [Laughs]

### What do you think of Japan's cultural crossover into America?

I myself don't intentionally aim projects at a particular market. However, my generation was very influenced by American culture. My own work from the '70s and '80s was shaped by American pop art, even though I wasn't aware of it at the time. But today, things are really sped up, and those cross-cultural influences are happening everywhere.

### What's next for you?

Well, there's a second book of ***Hero*** and a new picture book called ***M***. I'm also planning a large-scale exhibition in Europe, [designs for] some new games scheduled for this year and an original short film called ***Fantascope***. If you mean "next" in more general terms...actually, I tend to be influenced by so many things, but now that I'm not so young anymore, I'd like to dig deeper into myself. So for me, "next" is me, myself.

**"Hero is not traditional. I wanted him to be a new type of character with real depth and soul."**

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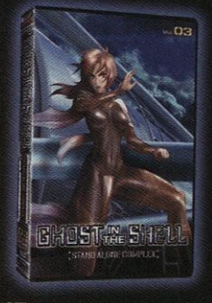


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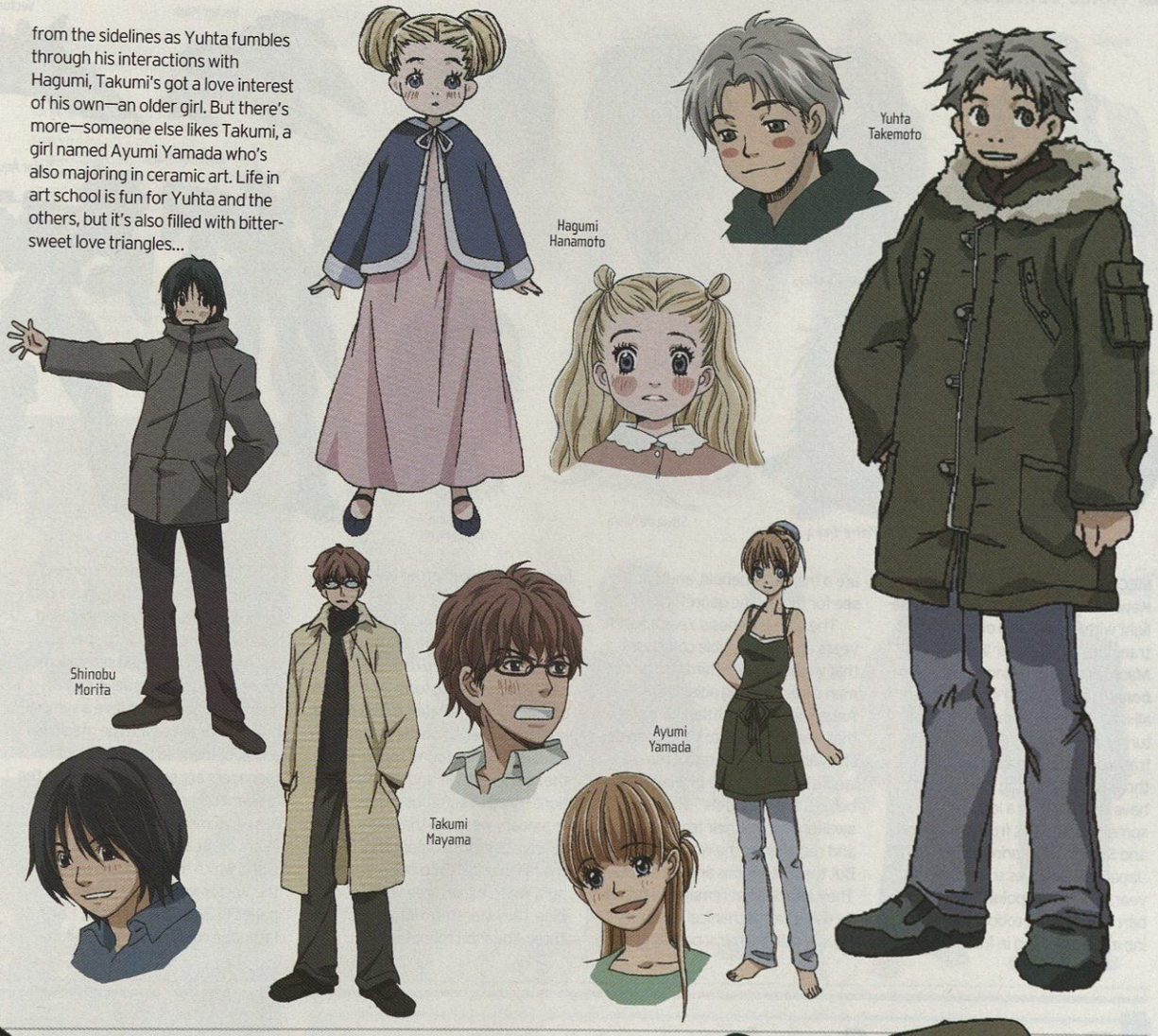
# Honey and Clover

## TWO LOVE TRIANGLES ARE BETTER THAN ONE

**CHICA UMI'S** popular manga *Hachimitsu to Clover* (which means "Honey and Clover" in Japanese) has been running monthly in *Young You* magazine, and is being made into a TV anime that's scheduled to air this spring in Japan! Kenichi Kasai (*Mirmo!*) is directing, our very own columnist Yosuke Kuroda (*MADLAX*) is doing the script, Hidekazu Shimamura (*Angel Sanctuary*) is designing the characters, and the animation production is by J.C.STAFF (*Ai Yori Aoshi*, *Maburaho*). The show is about sentimental love among adolescents during their crazy lives in college.

The story is told from the perspective of Yuhta Takemoto, an art college student majoring in architecture. He's great with his hands, but nothing else about him is particularly outstanding. People call this good-natured guy a lapdog. Yuhta has a crush on Hagumi Hanamoto, a girl who goes to the same school. She's super short and very shy, but she has remarkable art skills. Another character is Shinobu Morita, a guy who's been in college for a long, long time. This annoying guy always does things his own way. He's sort of a genius—in a matter of speaking—and makes some rather unusual passes at Hagumi. Slow development, misunderstandings and constant fuss...that's how love triangles get started. Isn't it?

In fact, there might be another love triangle brewing. Ceramic art major Takumi Mayama looks cool but is clumsy on the inside. While he's older than Yuhta and watches from the sidelines as Yuhta fumbles through his interactions with Hagumi, Takumi's got a love interest of his own—an older girl. But there's more—someone else likes Takumi, a girl named Ayumi Yamada who's also majoring in ceramic art. Life in art school is fun for Yuhta and the others, but it's also filled with bittersweet love triangles...

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# Samurai Champloo

## SECOND SEASON

### WHAT WILL BECOME OF FUU, MUGEN AND JIN?

**THE SECOND SEASON** of *Samurai Champloo* began this January in Japan. In preparation for the new season, two Fuji TV networks ran marathons of all 17 episodes of the first season in late December and early January.

The story's intensity picks up for the second season, with our three heroes (and don't forget Fuu's squirrel Momo!) facing even more of life's vicissitudes. The two new characters shown here make their first appearances in Episode 18 (Yuri) and Episode 20 (Sara). Many other unique and interesting supporting characters are expected to be introduced this season.

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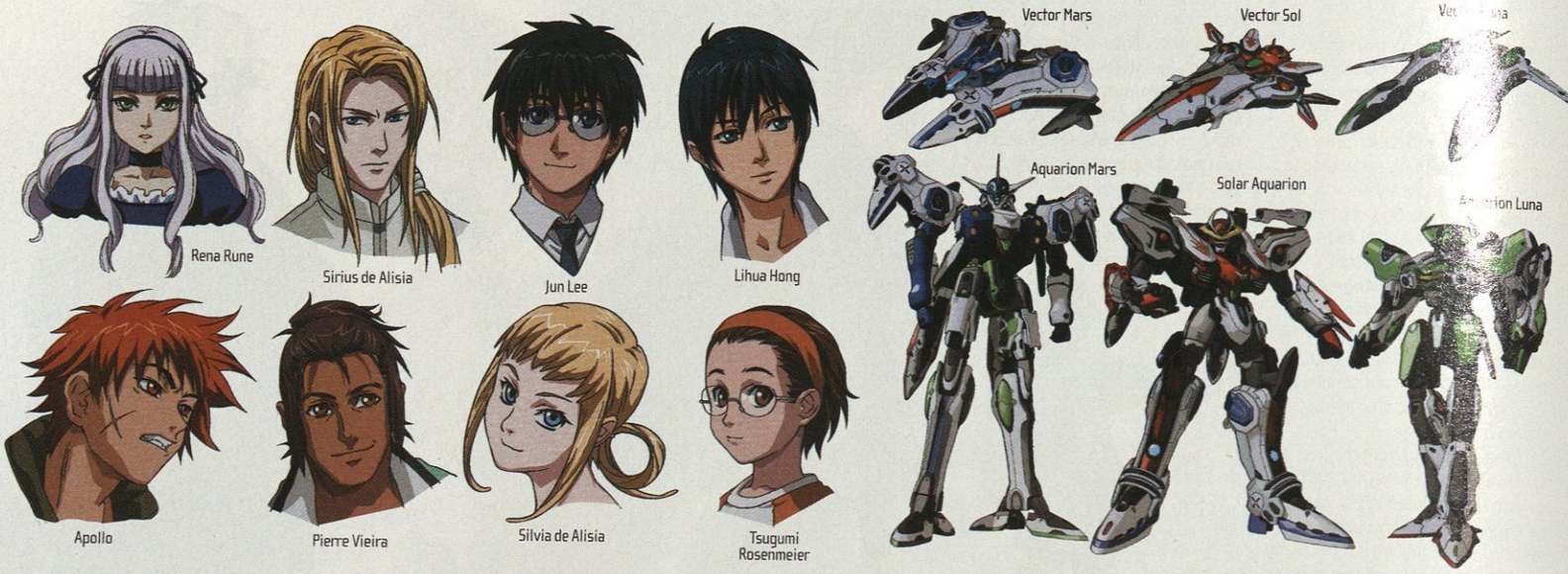
# Sosei no Aquarion

## THREE VEHICLES, THREE ROBOTS, THREE STUNNING TRANSFORMATIONS!




**MECHANICAL DESIGNER** Shoji Kawamori skyrocketed into the limelight with his graceful design of the transformable fighter *Valkyrie* in ***Macross*** (you may know it from ***Robotech***), and now he's back with an all-new 3D robot anime series featuring three super-machines that transform and combine to form three unique fighting robots. Fans have been waiting a long time to see something like this from Kawamori, and ***Sosei no Aquarion***, slated to hit Japanese airwaves sometime this year, won't disappoint. The no-holds-barred scenes of robots transforming and combining in full-CG glory are a marvel to behold, and a must-see for fans of the genre!

The time is Genesis Year 11, just 11 years after the terrible cataclysm that wiped out two-thirds of the human race. Thawing polar ice in Antarctica reveals Atlandia, a place that was supposed to have been destroyed 12 millennia ago. From Atlandia rises up a race of winged beings, "fallen angels" who have awakened from their frozen slumber and returned to the world of men. But their intentions are not friendly. They attack what remains of humanity using biomechanical weapons people call "mythical beasts," taking humans captive in order to extract their bioenergy.

The human race won't take this lying down. Soon after the deadly catastrophe, a group of people banded together to form DEAVA, an organization dedicated to rebuilding human civilization on the planet. Now it seems they've found something in the course of their undersea excavations—three Vector machines, the legendary weapons that were said to have been instrumental in driving the fallen angels into oblivion long ago. When these three vehicles combine, they transform into one of three Aquarion robot forms.

But there's a problem. Working the Vector machines requires a certain kind of pilot. Only the so-called "Elements"—people with special abilities, highly attuned sensory responses and an unusual purity of heart—are able to achieve a sympathetic resonance with the machines and pilot them. In the end, eight teenagers are selected, including the orphaned Apollo, who has managed to keep himself alive for the last 11 years by stealing food. Of these eight, which three will end up piloting the Vector machines? If their compatibility isn't up to the task, Earth's last hope could well end in failure.

But if they can work together, unimaginable power and perhaps even new ultimate attacks could be extracted from the machines. Sometimes it's not just a question of getting along well—a delicate balance of emotions also comes into play. Watch for subtle hints about the psychological growth of each character as the story develops.

**STAFF** creator & director: SHOJI KAWAMORI; co-creator & animation production: SATELIGHT; series organization: HIRO[illegible] OONOGI; character conception: EIJI KAN[illegible]
**CAST** Apollo: TAKUMA TERASHI[illegible]; Silvia: YUMI KAKAZU; Sirius: TOMOKA[illegible]SUGITA; Pierre: MASAYA ONOSAKA; Lih[illegible]SANAE KOBAYASHI; Rena: HIROMI SA[illegible]; Tsugumi: TSUGUMI HIGASAYAMA; Jun: [illegible]KE SAKAGUCHI

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# Erementar Gerad

## HUMAN + ADILRAID = ULTIMATE WEAPON

**PRODUCTION IS CURRENTLY** underway for the new TV anime ***Erementar Gerad***, based on Mayumi Azuma's manga (now running monthly in *Comic Blade* magazine). The story is set in the far distant future, in a place where the members of a mysterious tribe known as the Adilraid are able to "react" (i.e., fuse with) humans to call forth ultimate weapons. The young Coud van Giruet of the Red Lynx (a band of sky pirates) opens an old box and finds an enchanting female Adilraid named Reverie Metherlence sealed inside. Having now awakened from her deep sleep, Reverie promptly announces that she will head for AdilraidGluErden, the land of plenty. Feeling drawn to the young girl, Coud decides to accompany her on the journey.

Meanwhile, ARC AILE, an association dedicated to protecting the Adilraid, sends out three agents named Cisqua, Rowen and Kuea (herself an Adilraid) on a mission to capture Reverie. Eventually, Coud and Reverie join forces with the three ARC AILE agents, and together the five of them embark on an amazing adventure!

**STAFF** director: SHIGERU UEDA; character designer: TAEKO HORI; series organization: NARUHISA ARAKAWA; animation production: XEBEC
**CAST** Coud: AKIRA ISHIDA; Reverie: MIKAKO TAKAHASHI; Cisqua: NANA MIZUKI; Rowen: YUJI UEDA; Kuea: NAOKO SUZUKI

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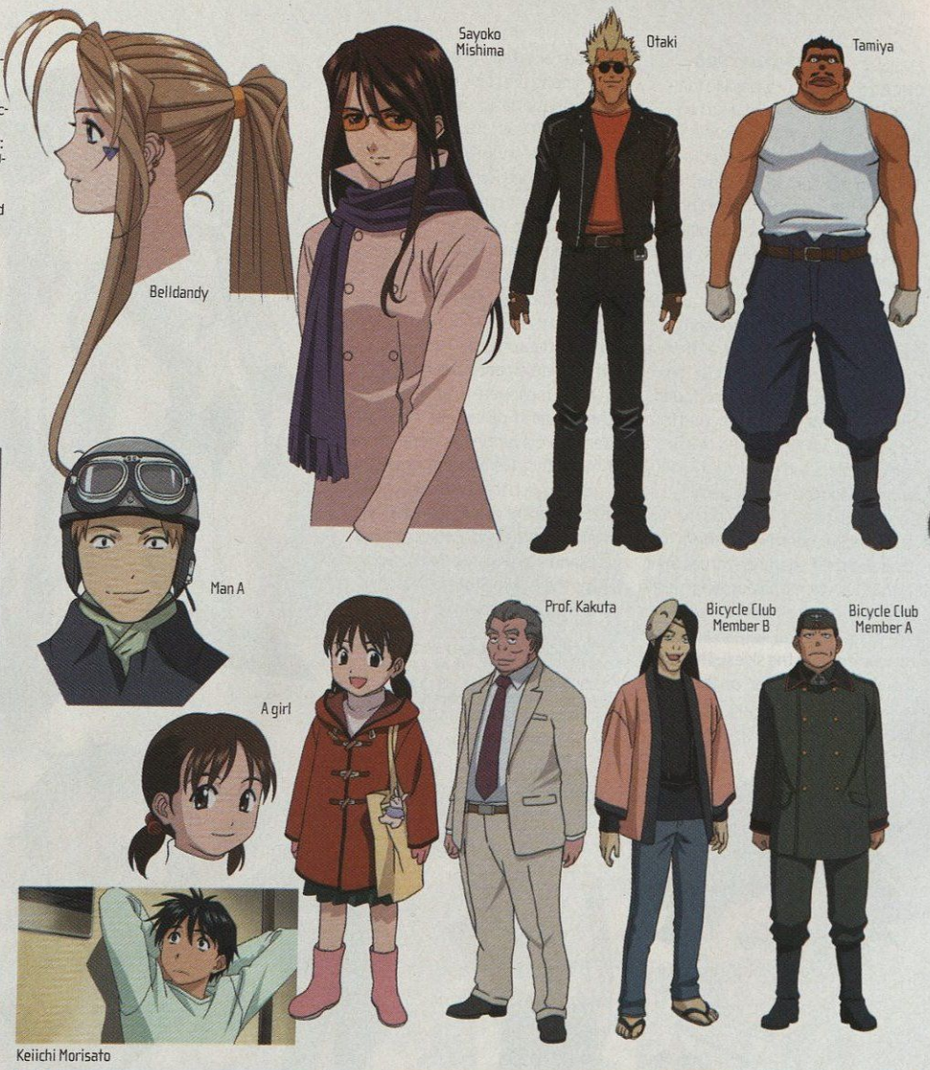
# Ah! Megami-sama

## OH ANK HEAVEN

**AS WE REPORTED** in our October 2004 issue, the super-popular manga *Oh My Goddess!* has been made into an anime series for the third time, and it's currently airing in Japan. It's about a good-natured college sophomore named Keiichi Morisato who has terrible luck. He asks Sayoko Mishima out on a date only to be turned down flat, and even worse, he lives in a dorm with a bunch of guys—no women allowed! One day, Keiichi picks up the phone and accidentally dials some kind of "goddess office." To his amazement, the beautiful goddess Belldandy emerges from the mirror!

**STAFF** creator: KOSUKE FUJISHIMA; director: HIROAKI GOHDA; series organization: HIROAKI GOHDA & HIROSHI WATANABE; character conception: KOSUKE FUJISHIMA; character designer & general animation director: HIDENORI MATSUBARA; mechanical designer: TOSHIHARU MURATA; art director: HIROSHI KATO; color designer: AIKO MATSUYAMA; compositing director: HIDETAKE NAKAJIMA; editing: SHOTA MIGIYAMA; sound director: YOSHIKAZU IWANAMI; sound effects: MASARU URAHATA; music: SHIROU HAMAGUCHI; animation production: AIC; production: AH! MY GODDESS PARTNERSHIP & TBS

**CAST** Keiichi Morisato: MASAMI KIKUCHI; Belldandy: KIKUKO INOUE; Urd: YUMI TOUMA; Skuld: AYA HISAKAWA; Tamiya: KIYOYUKI YANADA; Otaki: KAZUNARI FUTAMATA




Keiichi Morisato

## Renowned fashion designer Anna Sui does Gankutsuou costumes

**» INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED** fashion designer Anna Sui contributed to the creation of the recent anime ***Gankutsuou*** (based on ***The Count of Monte Cristo***). Her stylish costume designs add a very high-fashion, Anna-esque flavor to the final episode. So how did an American designer end up working on a Japanese production? Well, Anna Sui has always been fascinated by Japanese animation, so when she visited Japan to promote her new line of lipstick, she popped in on the famous animation studio GONZO. She saw footage from ***Gankutsuou*** and was struck by its quality. When show director Maeda Mahiro brought up the possibility of her doing costume designs, she jumped at the chance. Here are a few of Anna Sui's design drawings. We get to see more of them in the final episode, where they're worn by a number of the female characters.

illustrated by ANNA SUI

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# EUREKA SEVEN

## NEW FROM THE PRODUCERS OF FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST

***FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST* PRODUCER** BONES is responsible for both the original concept and production of the new TV anime *EUREKA SEVEN*, which is set to air in Japan this April. In the show, mankind has been chased from its home planet and now lives in a desolate world containing mysterious airborne particles called "Trapars." Hundreds of years after their arrival, a strange natural phenomenon called the "Summer of Love" throws the world into turmoil. Amidst the chaos, a man named Holland founds the Gekko State rebels. He used to be a champion athlete and one of the top soldiers in the United Federation of Pledgeo Tower special forces, but now he's fighting the government in a guerrilla war. Both Holland and the Federation forces fight with LFOs, giant transforming mecha that normally look like futuristic cars. They can switch to humanoid form to soar through the skies—they use the giant "Ref Boards" on their feet to take advantage of the Trapars in the atmosphere. The LFOs were developed using technology discovered among the ruins on the planet, and the basic design is modeled after a mysterious LFO called Nirvash.

One day, Nirvash lands in front of a boy named Renton. Eureka, a young woman, emerges from the cockpit and asks Renton's grandfather, who's a mechanic, to repair the LFO. Eureka is a member of the Gekko State, and Renton soon gets a meeting with Holland, much to his delight. Renton loves Ref, a sport where participants use the Trapars in the atmosphere to glide through the sky, and Holland was one of the best Ref players in the world at one time. In fact, Renton admires Holland so much that he thinks of him more as a Ref player than a rebel warrior. In the end, Renton boards Holland's airship, the *Gekko-Go*, and joins the Gekko State in search of the truth about his world.

**STAFF** director: TOMOKI KYODA; series organization: DAI SATO; character design: KENICHI YOSHIDA; mechanical design: SHOJI KAWAMORI; concept design: KAZUTAKA MIYATAKE; art director: KAZUO NAGAI

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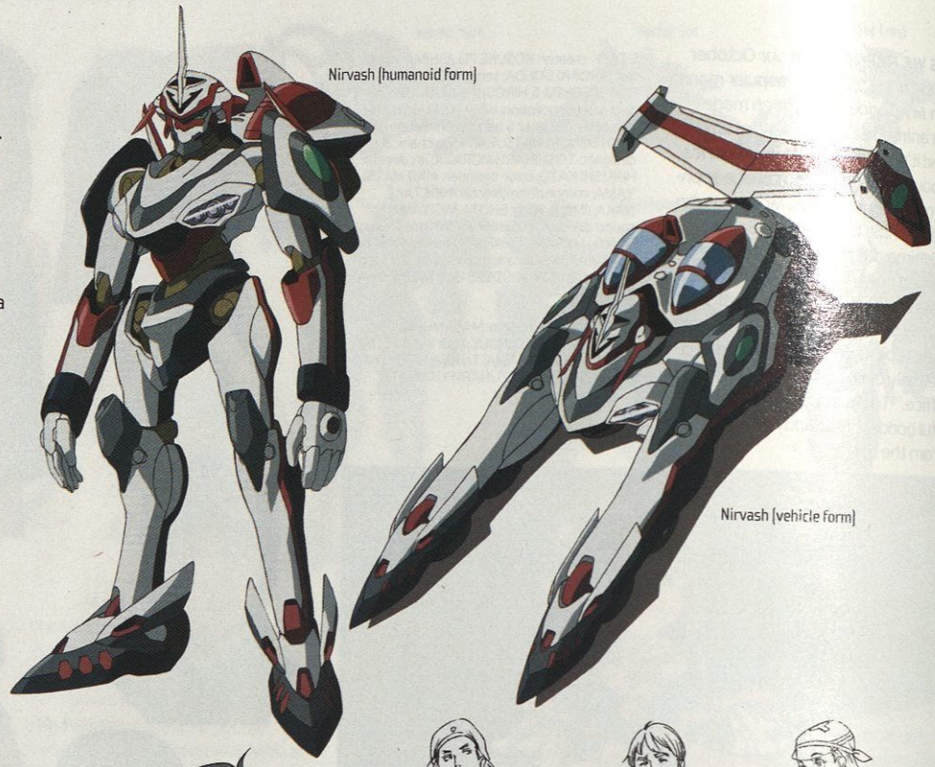
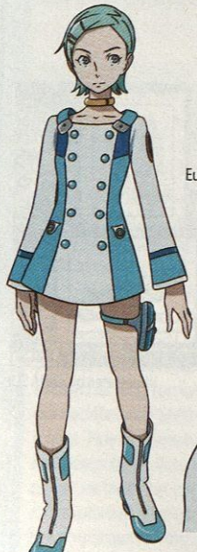
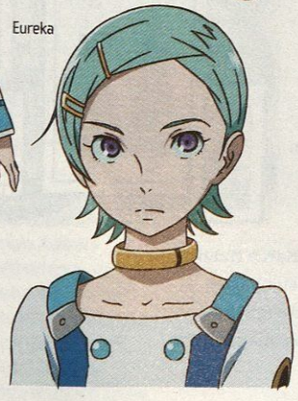
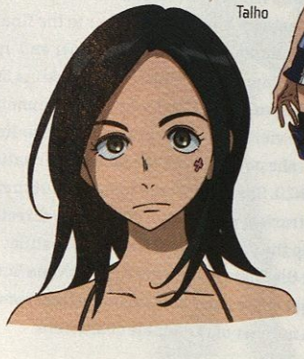


Renton

Holland


Eureka

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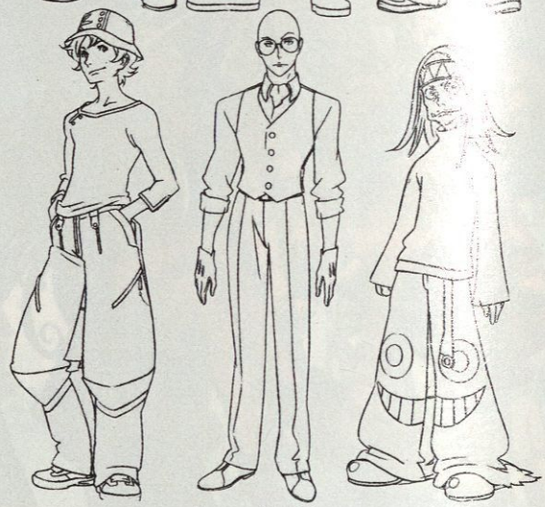
The crew of the *Gekko*

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# Legions of works by Japan's foremost anime directors. Check out the hottest anime and get the latest info!

# Tokyo International Anime Fair 2005

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## 決戦

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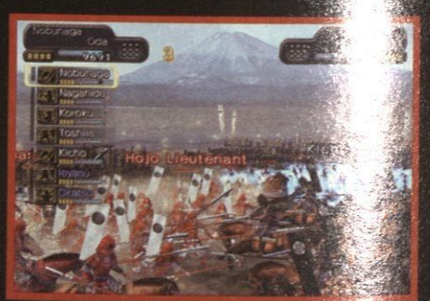


Choose your own battle techniques. Coordinate attacks with your support units or target an enemy unit with each of your nearby troops!

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Language
Sexual Themes
Violence

**A Kou Shibusawa Production** | **An Action Strategy Game**

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DOLBY PRO LOGIC II

Yucie
She's already found the second crystal flower in the Demon World, and it seems everything's on track for her to become the new Platinum Princess!
Glenda
She strongly believes that she's the perfect pick for the title of Platinum Princess. She didn't take Yucie seriously at first, but now she's starting to see her as a friend.
Elmina
The supposedly invincible Elmina is one of the Petite Princesses from the Heavens. Her big robot butler Balizan always accompanies her.

# a new Contender

## A not-so-perfect rival from the Heavens

Yucie hasn't given up on becoming Platinum Princess. In fact, she's already obtained two of the five crystal flowers she needs to win the crown. Each flower blooms in one of five different worlds: the Human World, the Demon World, the Heavens, the Spirit World and the Fairy World. Yucie has found two of them with the help of her rival Glenda, and now she needs to begin looking for the other three. Hurry, Yucie! We know you can become Platinum Princess! But wait... just who on Earth is the mysterious blonde?!

Well, her name is Elmina. She hails from the Heavens and is another candidate for Platinum Princess. Just look at her—she's got brains and beauty. Such fine blonde hair and blue eyes, and she's a good dancer to boot. She also has graceful wings on her back. Wow. She's perfect for Platinum Princess! Poor Yucie. How can she hope to best the beautiful Elmina?

But they say every rose has its thorn, and maybe Elmina isn't so perfect after all. For starters, she's clumsy—the kind of girl who forgets to put away her wings at the Princess Academy. And she's not very friendly, either. Perhaps everyone in the Heavens is as icy as she is?

And what's up with that sullen expression? Is it related to her drive to become Platinum Princess? Hopefully we'll learn her secret soon!

## TV PETITE PRINCESS YUCIE

**STORY** Long, long ago in a country far, far away, a girl named Yucie lives with her foster father and her butler Cube. Yucie is a cheerful, upbeat person, but she has one problem—she doesn't age. Her body is stuck at ten years old!

ORIGINALLY AIRED ON TV IN JAPAN. VOLUME 1 AVAILABLE MARCH 2005 IN THE US FROM ADV FILMS
www.advfilms.com/titles/yucie
www.yucie.com
Illustrated by ERI SUGANUMA
Finished by AIKO MATSUYAMA
Text by FUYUKI MATSUMOTO
©GAINAX・ぷらぷる製作委員会

**STAFF** creator & character conception: TAKAMI AKAI; supervisor: HIDEAKI ANNO; script: JUKKI HANADA, YASUNORI YAMADA & TAKASHI AOSHIMA; director: MASAHIKO OTSUKA; character design: KAZUKO TADANO; animation production: GAINAX & AIC

Iori Monaka
The warm-hearted Iori is Taruto's master, and he dotes on her despite the fact that he can't understand a single word she says. (That causes problems of its own!) His favorite pastime is baking sweets. How manly.
Kinako Monaka
Kinako lives with her uncle Iori. She's rambunctious and tomboyish and likes nothing better than dragging little Taruto around with her everywhere she goes! For some reason, Taruto just can't turn her back on her...
Taruto
Taruto me and tries hard, can't seem to g ing right. And Hisay zuki's vocal deliv st as spontaneou ute as Taruto her m sure my perform s a liability to the re e cast, but just like I'm doing my best.

# NoBoDY's

## MAGICAL MEOW MEOW TARUTO

TV

ORIGINALLY AIRED ON TV IN JAPAN
VOLUME 1 ON SALE NOW IN THE US FROM BANDAI ENTERTAINMENT
illustrated by HIROKO KAZUI
text by HIROKI DAIMON
©2001 介錯／バンダイビジュアル・電通

**STAFF** creator: KAISHAKU (originally ran in Shueisha's *Ultra Jump* magazine); director: TSUKASA SUNAGA; series organization & script: KOJI UEDA, AKIHIKO TAKADERA & HIROKO TOKITA; character designer & general animation director: HIROKO KAZUI; art director: YUKIHIRO SHIBUYA; music: HIKARU NANASE; animation production: TNK & MADHOUSE

**CAST** Taruto: HISAYO MIZUKI; Charlotte: MASAKO KURATA; Chitose: MARIA YAMAMOTO; Iori Monaka: HIROKI TAKAHASHI; Kinako Monaka: KYOKO TSURUNO; Kakipi: YOSHIKO KAMEI; Chips: AKIKO SAKAWA; Nachos: KAORI MIZUHASHI

**STORY** The cat-girl Taruto is working hard to control her troublesome magical powers. She has the support of her owner Iori and her friends Charlotte and Chitose, but that's not enough to keep her from messing things up all the time!

### Her clumsiness is the key

"I don't think you could find a cuter girls' show if you tried!" exclaims Maria Yamamoto, who voices Chitose in ***Magical Meow Meow Taruto***, a TV anime created by MADHOUSE (***Chobits***) based on the original manga by Kaishaku (***Steel Angel Kurumi***). And boy is that ever hitting the nail on the head. With maid uniforms, cat ears and cute little girl characters, this show could very well be the next big thing in the genre. Did we mention the main character Taruto can use magic?!

"She can use magic all right," adds show director Tsukasa Sunaga, "but she can't really control it. This is probably the first time you've ever heard of a magical main character that can't control her magic, right? I suppose there is the old yarn about the kid who sucks at using magic at first but then learns how and everything turns out all right in the end, but this isn't that story. In fact, I don't think Taruto will ever quite learn how to control her magic. Kaishaku, who wrote the original manga, made a comment to the effect that it's pretty rare to have a story where it's OK for the main character to be bad at using magic and I think that says something about the story."

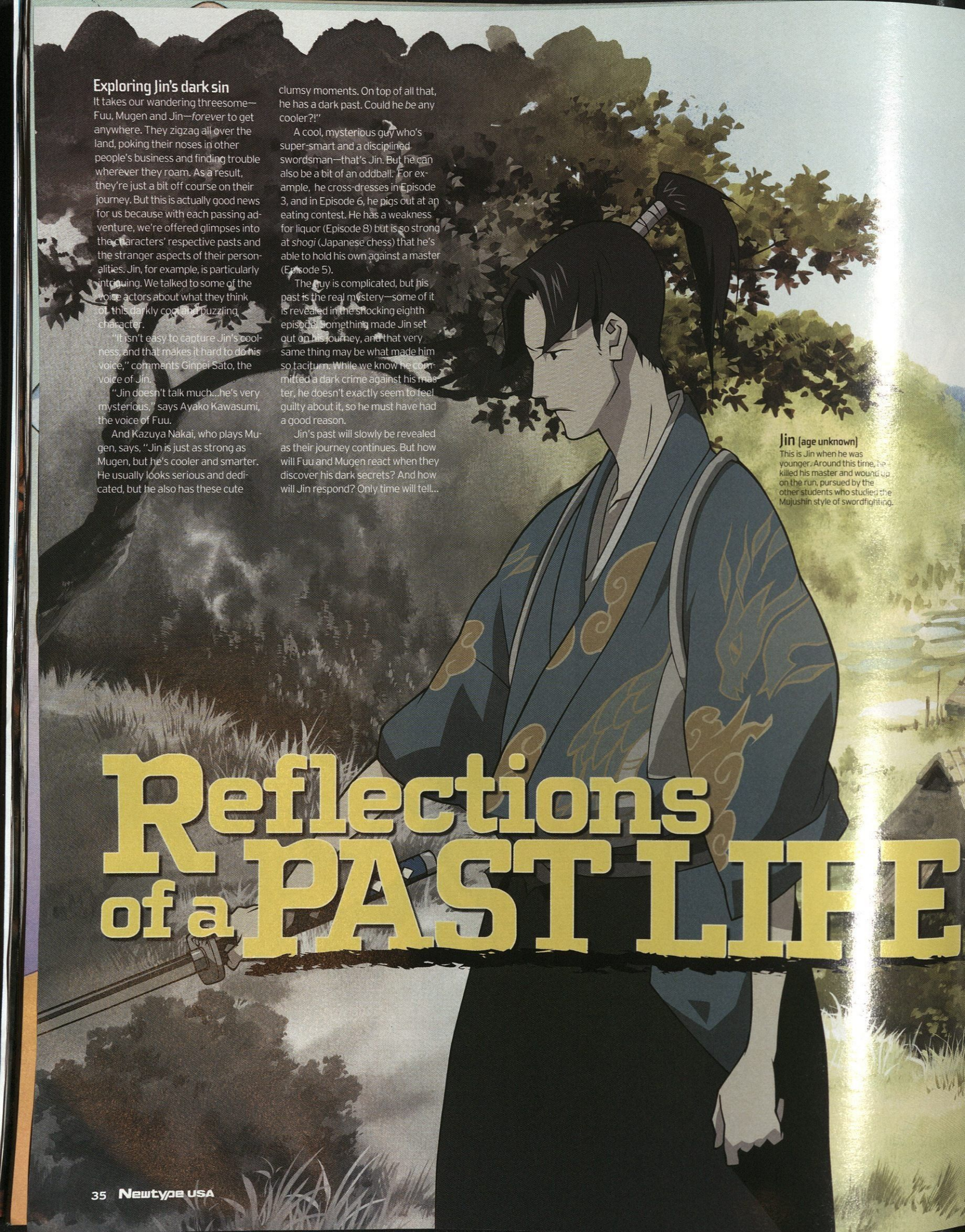
Sunaga's comments are right on target. ***Taruto*** has nary a trace of the tried-and-true pattern of a clumsy magical girl who overcomes difficulties on her path to becoming a full-blown heroine. Taruto adores her master Iori and does everything she can to please him, but somehow she just screws everything up. Whether she's trying to express her feelings for Iori or trying to protect others with her magic, nothing ever works out for this poor cat-girl—but that's precisely why we love her. She makes clumsy *cute*!

### FROM A BUNCH OF CAT LOVERS?!

Since the main character Taruto is a cat (sort of), we couldn't help but wonder whether anyone on the production staff loves cats. We asked director Sunaga to comment on this extremely important question. "Several members of the staff have cats themselves, including the scriptwriters, and I think their love of cats permeates the entire project. But as for me...well, I actually had a pet that was *eaten* by a cat! I still like cats, though." Powered by the deep adoration of a cat-loving staff and a director's heartfelt forgiveness, ***Taruto*** just has to be good!

**Charlotte**
Charlotte is a proud Persian! Masayo Kurata voices the character, and she seems to have quite a bit of fun with the role. "She's such a strong-willed girl...I just don't know how a weak-willed person like me can play her!" she jokes.

**Chitose**
Chitose just loves Taruto's tail! Maria Yamamoto is well-cast in the role of this delightful character. "Chitose was my first cat-eared character, and I was sooo excited about it!"



# Reflections of a PAST LIFE

## Exploring Jin's dark sin

It takes our wandering threesome—Fuu, Mugen and Jin—*forever* to get anywhere. They zigzag all over the land, poking their noses in other people's business and finding trouble wherever they roam. As a result, they're just a bit off course on their journey. But this is actually good news for us because with each passing adventure, we're offered glimpses into the characters' respective pasts and the stranger aspects of their personalities. Jin, for example, is particularly intriguing. We talked to some of the voice actors about what they think of this darkly cool and puzzling character.

"It isn't easy to capture Jin's coolness, and that makes it hard to do his voice," comments Ginpei Sato, the voice of Jin.

"Jin doesn't talk much...he's very mysterious," says Ayako Kawasumi, the voice of Fuu.

And Kazuya Nakai, who plays Mugen, says, "Jin is just as strong as Mugen, but he's cooler and smarter. He usually looks serious and dedicated, but he also has these cute clumsy moments. On top of all that, he has a dark past. Could he *be* any cooler?!"

A cool, mysterious guy who's super-smart and a disciplined swordsman—that's Jin. But he can also be a bit of an oddball. For example, he cross-dresses in Episode 3, and in Episode 6, he pigs out at an eating contest. He has a weakness for liquor (Episode 8) but is so strong at *shogi* (Japanese chess) that he's able to hold his own against a master (Episode 5).

The guy is complicated, but his past is the real mystery—some of it is revealed in the shocking eighth episode. Something made Jin set out on his journey, and that very same thing may be what made him so taciturn. While we know he committed a dark crime against his master, he doesn't exactly seem to feel guilty about it, so he must have had a good reason.

Jin's past will slowly be revealed as their journey continues. But how will Fuu and Mugen react when they discover his dark secrets? And how will Jin respond? Only time will tell...

**Jin (age unknown)**
This is Jin when he was younger. Around this time, he killed his master and wound up on the run, pursued by the other students who studied the Mujushin style of swordfighting.

# SAMURAI CHAMPLOO

**STORY** The chatterbox Fuu rescues Mugen and Jin from a bind, and they end up getting dragged along on her journey to find a particularly sweet-smelling samurai. Now Mugen and Jin are just looking for a way to shut her up and escape.

**ORIGINALLY AIRED ON TV IN JAPAN**
**VOLUME 2 AVAILABLE MARCH 2005 IN THE US FROM GENEON ENTERTAINMENT**
www.samuraichamploodvd.com
www.samuraichamploo.com
illustrated by EMI HIRANO
finished by ERI SUZUKI
directed by KAZUTO NAKAZAWA
background by YOSHINORI HISHINUMA (GREEN)
text by KOU FURUKAWA
©manglobe／下井草チャンプルーズ

**STAFF** director: SHINICHIRO WATANABE; character designer & chief animation director: KAZUTO NAKAZAWA; script: SHINJI OBARA, DAI SATO & others; emono (weapons) design: MAEDA MAHIRO; music: TSUTCHIE, FAT JON, NUJABES & FORCE OF NATURE; planning & production: MANGLOBE

**CAST** Mugen: KAZUYA NAKAI; Jin: GINPEI SATO; Fuu: AYAKO KAWASUMI

**Jin** (age 20)
He's surprisingly calm and mature for his age. Is he the product of his dark past?

**Don't get tricked by Jin's cold and emotionless expression. There's a lot more to him than that!**

## THE ILLUSION

This image is from a vision Jin had as he was being strangled in Episode 1. But why would he see himself surrounded by flames while bathing? It's a mystery, but that's not the only time we see the enigmatic Jin taking a dip. In Episode 2, he hops off to the hot springs—and then runs for dear life when he learns an assassin is in the water!

## THE PARTNERS

Jin and Mugen still fight whenever they have the opportunity, but they seem to be developing a mutual understanding...about how to deal with Fuu when she starts nagging. A perfect example is in Episode 2, when they both get so sick of Fuu that they each decide to escape at the exact same moment. It's like they understood each other without saying a word. Lately they're acting more like a comedy duo than bitter rivals.

## THE BEAUTY

In Episode 3, Jin disguises himself as a woman when he tries to infiltrate a brothel. He may look gorgeous, but he's just too tall to be the perfect woman. Only Jin could possibly pull something like this off—just imagine Mugen trying to do it. He's too unruly and animalistic to ever pass as a proper lady! Ultimately though, even Jin can't quite make it work—his adversaries soon figure out that he's not exactly a lady.

## THE GAME-MASTER

In shogi, as in swordfighting, players have to think ahead and anticipate their opponent's next move. It's a similarity that serves Jin well when he risks his life playing a game of shogi against a master of the game in Episode 5. During their match, Jin comments that he never won against his own master, who apparently taught him shogi in addition to swordsmanship. But didn't Jin surpass his master at swords?

## THE GOURMAND

Fuu, Mugen and Jin always seem to be hungry. In Episode 6, they enter an eating contest, but since they don't have enough money to cover the entry fee, Jin puts up his sword as collateral. He eats like a horse at the contest...but not for long. He gives up pretty quickly, even before Fuu and the rest of the contestants. He's obviously not a prizewinning eater—nor much of a drinker, considering how plastered he gets in Episode 8.

Freeman says of his leading lady, "Kari is willing to be completely vulnerable and reveal the bratty side of herself and the insecure side and [is still] able to bring a grace and nobility to her character as well. We get to see all the aspects of Pacifica because Kari is willing to share those parts of herself. I couldn't have asked for a better actress to play Pacifica, and I'm so grateful that we've been able to work together on this show."

One of the more interesting aspects of the series is that the names and places sound Western. This has made it easier to adapt; one of the actors even commented on the benefits of the easy-to-pronounce names and places. But that doesn't mean Freeman is any less concerned about staying true to the original work. "My goal is to try to stay as close to the creator's intention as possible," he tells us, stressing that he doesn't merely try to mimic the Japanese performances. "I want an American audience to respond to ***Scrapped Princess*** in English the same way a Japanese audience responds to ***Scrapped Princess*** in Japanese. Or at least as close as possible."

That belief is shared by Sakamoto, who tells us, "I want the audience to feel that the adaptation is organic, and as if the Japanese characters are simply speaking English. I always try to match the Japanese actor's vocal 'color' to their American counterparts. Although, of course, Japanese voice talent tends to be higher-pitched than American voice talent. So often we'll decide not to have the actors try to match the exact pitch of the Japanese voice."

Viewers will get to see the final product in April when the first disc hits shelves. The staff behind the show hopes anime fans won't be disappointed. "The only thing I would hope is project ducing to pick give a l Freema dedicat in the p the exp lish as

## SCRAPPED CHARACTERS

### Shannon

VOICE ACTOR CRISPIN FREEMAN

Shannon is a protective brother, and he's extremely skilled with a sword—just check out his battle with Chris in Episode 4. Freeman tells us, "What I really like about Shannon is the depth and sincerity of his beliefs. He has a very strong sense of himself, is incredibly self-possessed and intensely focused. Shannon realizes the responsibility he carries being the oldest of his siblings and knowing that he and Raquel are the only family that Pacifica has left. The most important thing to him is making sure that he keeps his small family unit alive, intact and eventually happy."

### Raquel

VOICE ACTRESS BRIDGET HOFFMAN

It's not easy to rattle the calm, slightly air-headed Raquel. She has a natural talent for using magic, a skill that often gets the group out of trouble [even if she overdoes things a little bit sometimes]. When they reach the town of Taurus, Raquel really gets into her new job selling "Mr. Soopie" buns for a local bakery. But is it the product or the messenger her customers desire most? Bridget Hoffman's calm, soft voice is a great match for Raquel's persona.

### Pacifica

VOICE ACTRESS KARI WAHLGREN

She is the Scrapped Princess. A lot of people want her dead. And her personality can shift from annoying to sincere in the blink of an eye. We had to ask her voice actress: Is Pacifica annoying? "At times, yes," Wahlgren says. "But you've got to feel for her. She's been hated and hunted for most of her life. She's never really had any friends, and she has to carry the weight of knowing that she may destroy the entire planet...All on top of being a teenager."

### Leo

VOICE ACTOR YURI

The redheaded Leo is Knights, Linevan's el heels for Pacifica on almost immediately. through the course c character. "He starts principles that he lea learn what all his tra tions in the real wor happy." Lowenthal's scene in which I'm w

## EPISODE GUIDE

### Episode 1

OVERTURE OF THE ABANDONED-CAT PRINCESS

We meet up with Pacifica, Raquel and Shannon, three siblings who are trying to leave the country of Linevan in order to save their sister from being slaughtered to prevent some evil occurrence on her 16th birthday. But even those they trust will turn against them.

### Episode 2

MARCH OF THE HALF-BAKED KNIGHT

A redheaded knight named Leo meets up with our travelers and joins them on their quest. He falls in love with Pacifica at first sight, not knowing that she is the wanted princess. Shannon and Pacifica follow Leo to the home of Doyle Barret, a former Amber Knight who lives a quiet life after being involved in the original plan to dispose of the Scrapped Princess.

### Episode 3

FANFARE FOR THE UNFORGIVEN MAN

Our adventurers narrowly slip past a military checkpoint and arrive in the town of Taurus. During their stay at the Big Bear Inn, Pacifica befriends Winia, a girl who works at the establishment. They take up part-time jobs for a local bakery to earn some cash but are soon discovered, and Winia is kidnapped by Chris, a tenacious member of the king's task force of hitmen, and used as bait.

### Episode

CONCERTO OF MEET

Shannon ventures o Winia, leaving Pacifi horribly wrong in Ta the city. Can the pow town from being wip

**WATCH CLOSELY** While the setting of the show appears to be of the standard fantasy variety, there are hints that it might not always be th character who appears a few times within the first four episodes, has a lot to do with the change that will occur later.

that my enthusiasm for the
and my commitment to pro
an excellent dub inspires fa
up *Scrapped Princess* and
isten to the English dialogu
an says. "A lot of care and
cion from everyone involv
roduction went into mak
perience of watching it in E
rich as possible."

OWENTHAL
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their first meeting and proposes to her
"Leo really gets a terrific jo
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ining means and how it actu
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favorite Leo scenes? "Ah, jee
earing the Mr. Soopie costu

4

INGS AND PARTINGS
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ca and Raquel at the inn. But things go
urus before the party can escape from
erless Pacifica do anything to save the
ed out completely?

at way. Zefiris, a sage

# FIGHTING FATE

# SCRAPPED PRINCESS

**STORY** Fifteen years ago, a set of twins (a boy and a girl) was born to the king of Linevan. Shortly after their birth, a prophecy indicated that when the girl turned 16, she would bring about the end of humanity. To avoid this terrible fate, the king ordered the princess disposed of—scrapped. She miraculously survives and is raised away from the kingdom that would kill her. But when she turns 15, the king's guards catch wind that she's still alive and set out to finish the job...

ORIGINALLY AIRED ON TV IN JAPAN
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scrappedprincess.bandai-ent.com
www.sutepri.com
text by CHRIS JOHNSTON
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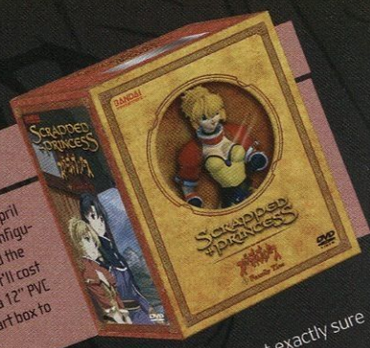
## PRINCESS IN A BOX

When ***Scrapped Princess*** comes out on April 26, you'll be able to choose from two configurations. One is a disc-only release, and the other is a limited-edition box set that'll cost you a few extra beans but includes a 12" PVC figure of Pacifica and a collector's art box to hold all six volumes of the series.




### Sweet Sixteen

A girl's 16th birthday is a milestone in her life—a time of parties, driver's licenses and high-school crushes. But when Pacifica Cassul turns 16, it could spell the end for the people of Linevan. At least, that's what St. Grendel prophesized in a revelation when she was born. To avoid this terrible fate, the king cast her away, ordering her to be tossed off a cliff and left for dead. And that was supposed to be the end—the prophecy would never come to fruition, and the kingdom would be saved.

Only...she didn't die. She was rescued, given the name Pacifica and raised by adoptive parents. Since then, she has lived a quiet, sheltered life with her new brother and sister, the expert swordsman Shannon and the skilled (at least most of the time) mage Raquel. But her simple life doesn't last. With just one more year left before she turns 16, the king discovers that she's still alive. As assassins close in to kill her in the name of the Lord God Mauser, Shannon, Raquel and Pacifica begin a journey to escape to safer lands and disprove the prophecy.

***Scrapped Princess*** was adapted from a series of novels written by Ichiro Sakaki and illustrated by Yukinobu Azumi. This 24-episode anime series debuted on Japanese TV in 2003, produced by the prolific studio BONES (***Wolf's Rain***, ***RahXephon***). This April, Bandai Entertainment brings the show to DVD in America.

"***Scrapped Princess*** is about the dangers of religious fundamentalism," explains Crispin Freeman, a veteran voice actor whose extensive body of anime work includes voicing Tsume in ***Wolf's Rain*** and adapting the script for ***Witch Hunter Robin***. Freeman is currently writing and directing the English-language ***Scrapped Princess*** for the southern California-based production studio Bang Zoom! Entertainment. "[Pacifica] must be killed because God says so; she is the poison that will destroy the world. One little problem, though: In a world of magic and spells, swords and sorcery, this princess doesn't seem to have any powers whatsoever. She certainly doesn't *want* to destroy the world. So why does God want her dead?" Well, if you base it on the first five minutes, you might not care to learn the answer. She seems like a spoiled brat, ordering Shannon and Raquel around as if they're her doting servants (though they don't react as such). But the first impression of Pacifica is deceiving. As the story moves along and our travelers meet and interact with other characters in the kingdom, you get a sense that she's a good person who's been unfairly labeled and that her brattiness is more defense mechanism than her true self.

Kari Wahlgren plays the doomed princess. She says of the casting process, "They called me and said, 'Kari, we need someone to play a blonde, spoiled princess who drives everyone crazy and may possibly destroy the world...we think you'd be perfect.' I'm still not exactly sure how to take that..."

It's definitely a compliment. Fans will recognize Wahlgren's previous work as fan-favorite characters like ***FLCL***'s Vespa-riding Haruhara Haruko and ***Witch Hunter Robin***'s cool and collected craft-user Robin Sena. Given the range of Pacifica's character from spoiled brat to caring friend and sibling, it's an excellent choice.

"Kari's voice has a very soft part and a very strong part," says Bang Zoom! casting director Kaeko Sakamoto of Wahlgren's work. "Since the princess has both characteristics, I thought Kari would be the perfect choice for this role."







FIGHTING FATE

# The great ESCAPE

## Gainer Sanga

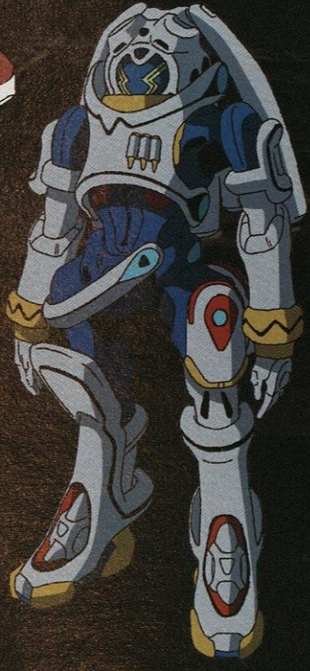
**A GAMER WHO HOLDS THE TITLE OF "KING"**

Gainer lives in the Siberian Domepolis. He gets drawn into the commotion caused by Gain, and he boards the Overman named *King Gainer*. Gainer is peerless when it comes to gaming, but in real life he's just a wimpy little kid who idolizes Gain.

## Gain Bijou

**THE BLACK SOUTH[illegible] CROSS**

Gain is a roving reto[illegible]y who travels from place to place[illegible]up the masses in favor of Exodus. His [illegible]have turned him into a wanted man[illegible]et him the moniker "the Black [illegible]n Cross." He's a badass with the cha[illegible]ght his way out of nearly any predica[illegible]s also a superb marksman.



## King Gainer

Among the common Silhouette Machines, only those with the most advanced functionality are called Overmen. Gainer pilots this particular Overman, which carries an unusual chaingun weapon and has a unique Overskill.

### CHARACTER DESIGNERS

**YOSHIHIRO NAKAMURA & KINU NISHIMURA**

This is the first time for both Nakamura and Nishimura to be involved with an original anime project. Nakamura is a manga artist by trade, and his exceptional talent and promise led the director to scout him out directly. On the other hand, Nishimura has worked mainly as an illustrator and designer for games, just like the show's mechanical designer Yasuda, whose introduction landed Nishimura a seat on the production. Nishimura's main contributions have been in the area of clothing design, that all-important ingredient for fleshing out the look and feel of an anime world.

## Eastward ho[illegible]th Overmen in tow!

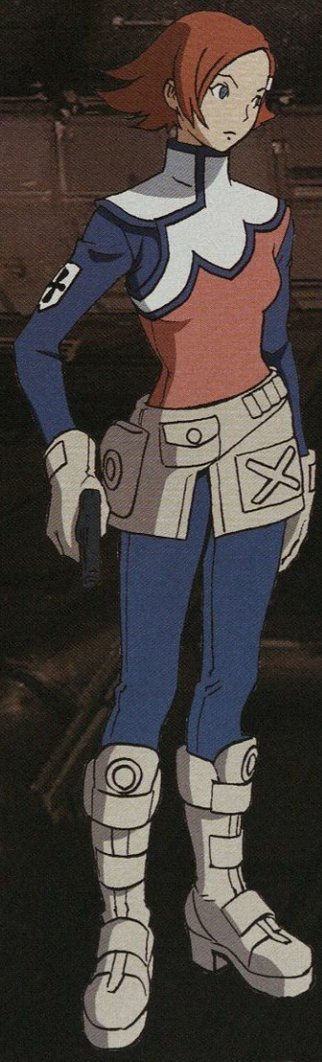
On an Earth of the far distant future, after the enviro[illegible]ital cataclysm that devastated civilization, the remaining temperate zones once populated by giant cities were set aside as farms, ranches and fisheries, displacing human communities and forcing them to live in the giant "Domepolis" cities—domed cities erected for the purpose of sustaining human life in normally uninhabitable areas of the planet. But those who want to leave the cities have begun voicing their discontent. These so-called "Returnists" argue that people should be allowed to inhabit the lands of their forefathers and live in peace, and the movement has led to a rise in escape attempts. The act of escaping a Domepolis is branded "Exodus" and criminalized. The Exodus issue is a divisive one, and it has led to a number of suspicious uprisings in domed cities across the planet. Gainer Sanga lives in the Siberian Domepolis, where strife between Returnists and Anti-Returnists has become a simple fact of life.

One of the remarkable technologies used to prop up this unusual sociopolitical system is the Silhouette Engine, so named because the material it's made of emits energy, rendering the need for a conventional engine moot, and thus the machine's outward form—the "silhouette"—*is* the engine. Silhouette Machines employing Silhouette Engine technology have been adapted for both commercial and military use, and a large number of variations on the basic design are in use. Particularly excellent varieties touting the highest levels of technology are dubbed "Overmen." These Overmen are so advanced that they put ordinary Silhouette Machines to shame, and the success of Exodus missions depends greatly on their existence. Returnists secretly burn the midnight oil to develop their plans to break free from the domes and escape their lives of oppression. Let the Exodus begin!

## ANIMATION DIRECTOR

**KENICHI YOSHIDA**

Yoshida came to ***Overman*** following a stint as an animation director's assistant on the ***Cowboy Bebop*** film ***Knockin' on Heaven's Door***. Eager to work with ***Overman*** director Tomino, Yoshida linked up with him just as work on the ***Bebop*** film was drawing to a close. Yoshida has proven himself very effective at taking the highly individualistic drawings from each designer and blending them for the final animation.



### Sara Kodama

**ADVOCATE FOR THE EXODUS TO YAPAN**

Sara is the same age as Gainer, who has a crush on her. As a Silhouette Machine pilot herself, she fights for the Gauli Troop, a self-defense force protecting the city in which Gainer lives. Although Gainer doesn't know it yet, Sara supports Gain's plan for an Exodus to Yapan.

### Ana Medaiyu

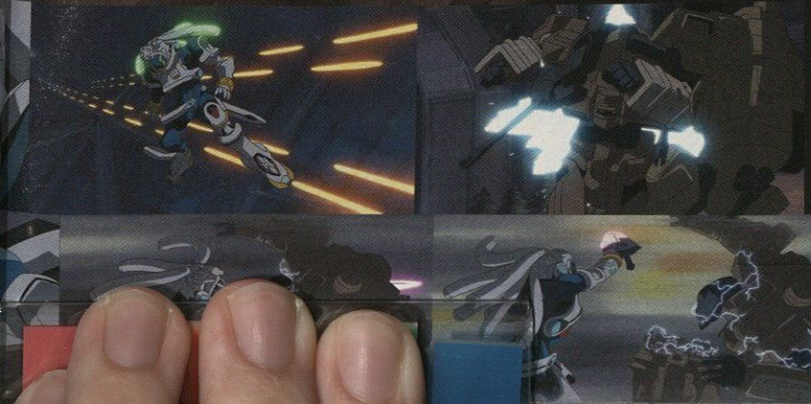
**CAPTIVE DAUGHTER OF DUKE MEDAIYU**

Ana is the daughter of Duke Medaiyu. Having been captured by Gain, she's technically a hostage, but she doesn't really take it to heart. Her noble upbringing gives her speech a precocious air of refinement. Her three pets are constantly crawling nearby!

## MECHANICAL DESIGNERS

**AKIRA YASUDA & KIMITOSHI YAMANE**

Yasuda was previously in charge of character design concepts for the ***Turn A Gundam*** series, but on this project, he chiefly does mechanical designs for the main mecha. Yamane, who has already established himself as an indispensable participant in any SUNRISE production, is in charge of ships and cockpit designs.



### Silhouette Machine Gotchko

Silhouette Machines are driven by the Silhouette Engine, a power source made up of a remarkable energy-emissive material that's built into the frame of the machines themselves. Gain's *Gotchko* machine provides support for Gainer's Overman. The *Gotchko* is equipped with a powerful rifle...and a secret!

## Tenacious teens

***Overman King Gainer*** takes place on a future Earth that's endured an environmental cataclysm. Humans have survived, finding ways to flourish under the harsh conditions of their ravaged planet. Created by renowned anime director Yoshiyuki Tomino of ***Gundam*** fame, this anime is packed with human drama, relentless action and a touch of mystery.

The setting is one of the most remarkable aspects of the show. We asked producer Yoshitaka Kawaguchi how the concept of the domed cities came about. "It all started when I was chatting with Mr. Tomino. We were discussing how it'd be [technologically] impossible for human beings to build a large-scale space colony during the 21st century. It's more realistic to figure out how people could survive in a given environment and imagine how the future would turn out as a result."

Two mecha pilots are forced to survive in this postapocalyptic landscape—Gain, a revolutionary leader, and Gainer, a hardcore gamer who's pulled into a violent political struggle. "We wanted to make an uncomplicated show with energetic men who grow up as the story progresses," explains Kawaguchi. "Their piloting skills get better, too. There's a certain kind of spirit in the show that's very simple but which many people can empathize with."

Series like ***Gundam*** and ***Star Wars*** continue to captivate audiences around the world because they're coming-of-age stories about normal teens who have the fate of mankind on their shoulders. The protagonists are true heroes, but they're also jus normal kids who are easy to empathize with. That's the type of spir Kawasaki wanted for ***Overman Kin Gainer***.

"Our ultimate goal was to make fun. If people enjoy a certain aspec of the series, then it doesn't reall matter whether it'd work that wa real life. That's what I learned du the planning phase."

**Gain Bijou**
Gain is a revolutionary, and he pilots the Silhouette Machine *Gotchiko*. He's the mastermind behind the planned Exodus to the prosperous land of Yapan. His nickname is "the Black Southern Cross."

# The great ESCAPE

Mobile Suit Gundam

Brain Powered

Turn A Gundam

## CREATOR BIO

**Profile: Yoshiyuki Tomino**
Born in 1941, Tomino is one of Japan's top anime directors. This pioneer of modern anime is still bringing great works to the world today. He went freelance after learning the ropes at Osamu Tezuka's Mushi Production. After his breakaway success with ***Mobile Suit Gundam***, he went on to collaborate with SUNRISE on many more hit anime, including ***Brain Powered*** and ***Turn A Gundam***. He's also famous for discovering many other big-name talents, like mecha designer Akira Yasuda and scriptwriter Ichiro Okouchi, both of whom joined him on ***Overman King Gainer***!

### Gainer Sanga

Gainer is the champion of the fighting game "Overman." One day, he gets involved in Gain's Exodus plans and ends up becoming the pilot of an Overman mecha named *King Gainer*.

### Sara Kodama

A member of the city-defense patrol, Sara pilots her Silhouette Machine *Panther* and is also involved in Gain's Exodus. Gainer has a secret crush on her.

# OVERMAN KING GAINER

**STORY** In Earth's distant future, mankind is confined to domed cities. A group of people is secretly planning an "Exodus" from a Siberian Domepolis called Wulgusk, and a game prodigy named Gainer Sanga finds himself smack dab in the middle of it.

**BROADCAST:** AIRED ON TV IN JAPAN
**RELEASE:** AVAILABLE APRIL 2008 IN THE US
**SHOP:** BANDAI ENTERTAINMENT
www.bandai-ent.com
exodus.main.jp/official
www.wowow.co.jp/drama_anime/king
illustrated by KENICHI YOSHIDA
finished by SAYOKO YOKOYAMA
background by ATELIER MUSA
text by KAZUHO HYOOOH
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©サンライズ
©創通エージェンシー・サンライズ

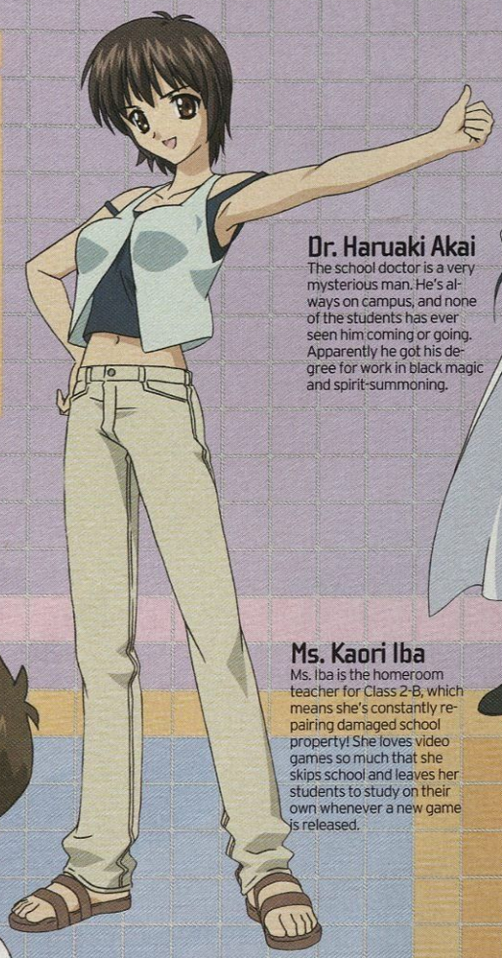
**STAFF:** creation & direction: YOSHIYUKI TOMINO; series organization: ICHIRO OKOUCHI; character design: YOSHIHIRO NAKAMURA, KINU NISHIMURA (CAPCOM) & KENICHI YOSHIDA; mecha design: AKIRA YASUDA, KIMITOSHI YAMANE & KENICHI YOSHIDA; animation director: KENICHI YOSHIDA; music: KOUHEI TANAKA

**CAST:** Gainer Sanga: HIROFUMI NOJIMA; Gain Bijou: OTOYA KAWANO; Sara Kodama: AI KOBAYASHI; Ana Medaiyu: NORIKO KITOU

## FACULTY

### POWERFUL PERSONALITIES

There are a lot of peculiar kids at Kazuki's school, but the faculty is more than up to the task. Take Ms. Iba, for instance. Class 2-B is infamous as a problem class, but Ms. Iba is so energetic and strong-willed that she handles them without even breaking a sweat. (She doesn't worry about being politically correct either! Like students like teacher, eh?) Then there's Dr. Akai, who was the first one to understand and explain the secret of Kazuki's genes. He's a nice guy who seems to care about Kazuki, but there's also something off-kilter about him. He's rumored to be connected to a string of bizarre dissections and scientific experiments...



### Dr. Haruaki Akai

The school doctor is a very mysterious man. He's always on campus, and none of the students has ever seen him coming or going. Apparently he got his degree for work in black magic and spirit-summoning.

### Ms. Kaori Iba

Ms. Iba is the homeroom teacher for Class 2-B, which means she's constantly repairing damaged school property! She loves video games so much that she skips school and leaves her students to study on their own whenever a new game is released.

### Kazuki Shikimori

Kazuki can only use magic eight times in his whole life, which is a definite downer in a world where most people can use it hundreds or thousands of times. But he still uses his magic to help people. He's just too nice for his own good.

## RIVALS

### YUNA'S EQUALS IN EVERY WAY

Yuna is totally devoted to Kazuki, but she has some stiff competition. Kuriko and Rin are two of the best magicians around, and they're determined to get Kazuki and his DNA for themselves. Yuna has to be on guard at all times because the other two are always looking for an opening to jump him. The three girls turn into she-devils when they're fighting, and Kazuki runs for cover when the battles start. (It may seem wimpy, but at least he lives to see another day!) At first Kuriko and Rin only wanted Kazuki's genes, but now they're slowly beginning to respect him for who he is, which is bad news for Yuna...

### Rin Kamishiro

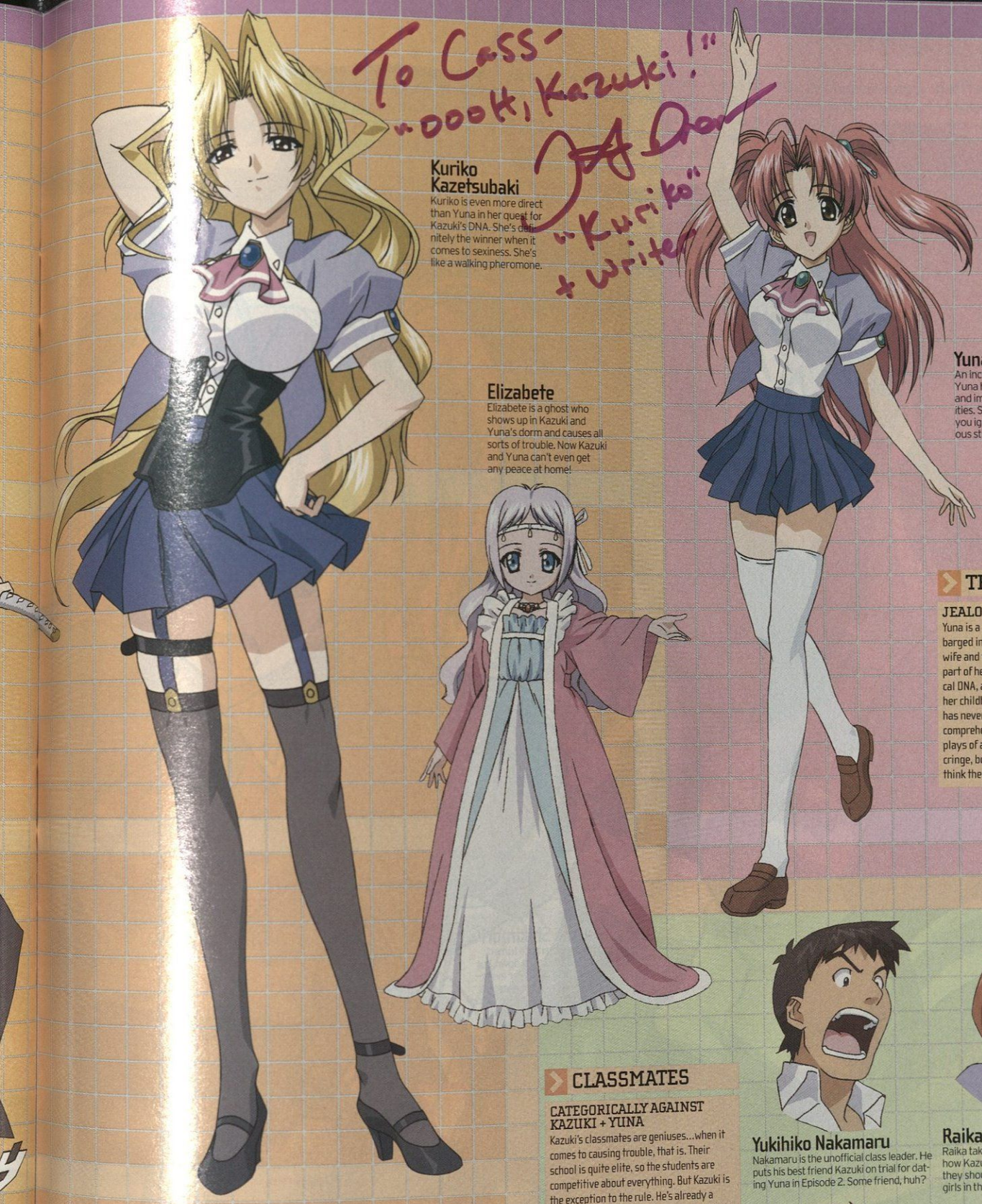
Rin is a very serious and dedicated girl. She hates wishy-washy guys like Kazuki, and she only wants to marry him because her family ordered her to.

## THE HUNTED

### CRAZY LOVE

Kazuki is no stud, but hordes of hot girls want to bear his children. He's living a dream life, but he doesn't seem to appreciate it. He's so shy he just wishes they'd all go away and leave him alone. The ladies are definitely wasted on this fragile lad. But Yuna loves him, and he seems to feel something for her in return...although her over-the-top behavior often sends him running (and who could blame him?!). Will Kazuki ever stop hiding and accept Yuna's love?

# People are



To Cass-
"Dooh, Kazuki!"
"Kuriko"
+ Writer

### Kuriko Kazetsubaki
Kuriko is even more direct than Yuna in her quest for Kazuki's DNA. She's definitely the winner when it comes to sexiness. She's like a walking pheromone.

### Elizabete
Elizabete is a ghost who shows up in Kazuki and Yuna's dorm and causes all sorts of trouble. Now Kazuki and Yuna can't even get any peace at home!

### Yuna Miyama
An incredibly talented girl, Yuna has excellent grades and impressive magical abilities. She seems perfect—if you ignore her insane jealous streak.

## THE HUNTRESS

**JEALOUSLY YOURS**

Yuna is a straightforward girl. After all, she barged into Kazuki's life, declared herself his wife and tried to force him to accept it. While part of her was interested in Kazuki's magical DNA, another part was nobly honoring her childhood promise to marry him. Kazuki has never had a girlfriend, and he just can't comprehend Yuna's devotion. Her crazy displays of adoration and jealousy make him cringe, but the ever-ditzy Yuna doesn't even think there's a problem!

## CLASSMATES

**CATEGORICALLY AGAINST KAZUKI + YUNA**

Kazuki's classmates are geniuses...when it comes to causing trouble, that is. Their school is quite elite, so the students are competitive about everything. But Kazuki is the exception to the rule. He's already a loser, so he sees no point in fighting with the others. As a result, his life has been relatively calm and peaceful. All that changes when Yuna shows interest in Kazuki, and his fellow students just can't stand the thought of them together. The male students put poor Kazuki on trial in a class "court," arguing that he doesn't deserve a girl like her, and the fickle girls start hunting him down in hopes of getting him to dump Yuna for them.



### Yukihiko Nakamaru
Nakamaru is the unofficial class leader. He puts his best friend Kazuki on trial for dating Yuna in Episode 2. Some friend, huh?

### Raika Naruo
Raika takes a logical and fair approach to how Kazuki's genes should be distributed—they should be shared equally among all the girls in the class!

### Kazumi Matsuda
Kazumi stepped in to stop Nakamaru and his troublemaking, but she threw the classroom into chaos in the process. She's the head honcho among the girls of Class 2-B.

### Mitsuhiro Uki
Mitsuhiro is Kazuki's friend, but he still helped put Kazuki on trial—he even told him he was an embarrassment to the school!

## From geek to chic in a flash

Kazuki Shikimori could be the luckiest guy on the planet. All of a sudden he's become the object of a hot new transfer student's desires. In fact, Yuna recently showed up at his dorm and announced that she's his new wife! What more could a guy want?

Well, he could want a slightly less insane life, for starters. Kazuki may attend an elite magic school, but he's an utter failure at magic. He's a loser, and there's no way the guys in his class will accept the beautiful Yuna getting hitched to a dweeb like him. Especially not in his class—the problem Class 2-B, which is chock-full of troublemakers. Even the girls cause problems for Kazuki. It turns out that he has very special DNA, and they all want to bear his children. They practically jump at every opportunity to get into his...genes.

"The wild antics of the students in Class 2-B were a lot of fun in the original manga, and the TV staff really got into animating those characters," says Shinichiro Kimura, the director of ***Maburaho***. "They play a big part in the anime, generally messing things up between Kazuki and Yuna. They're just really crazy kids, out for a good time or to make a quick buck. So we had to work hard to keep it from getting too wild [laughs]."

Class 2-B may not have Kuriko and Rin, Yuna's main rivals for Kazuki's attention, but you should still keep an eye on this crazy class!

### Yuna Miyama

Yuna dropped a bombshell on her first day at her new school—she introduced herself as Yuna *Shikimori*, Kazuki's wife. More than a little ditzy, she doesn't have a clue how much trouble she's causing for everyone.

### Kazumi Matsuda

The cunning Kazumi constantly twists things around to her benefit, and she seems to have some sort of friendly insult-war going on with Nakamaru. She's somehow different than the other girls going after Kazuki.

### Kazuki Shikimori

Yuna's appearance turned Kazuki's life upside down, but he can't blame her for *everything*. His indecisiveness causes problems galore. Going with the flow is all well and good, but not when the flow's headed in the wrong direction!

# It's a gene

## MABURAHO

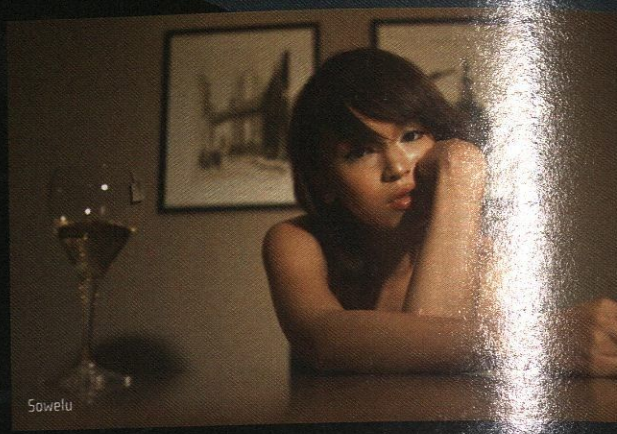
ORIGINALLY AIRED ON TV IN JAPAN
VOLUME 1 AVAILABLE SPRING 2005 IN THE US FROM ADV FILMS
www.maburaho.com
www.advfilms.com
illustrated by YASUNARI NITTA
finished by J.C.STAFF
text by HIROKI DAIMON
©2003 まぶらほ製作委員会

STAFF creator: TOSHIHIKO TSUKIJU & OJI KOMATSU (manga running in *Gekkan Dragon Magazine* from Fujimi Shobo); director: SHINICHIRO KIMURA; series organization: KOUICHI TAKI; character design: YASUNARI NITTA; animation production: J.C.STAFF

CAST Kazuki Shikimori: DAISUKE SAKAGUCHI; Yuna Miyama: MITOMI NABATAME; Kuriko Kazetsuka: YUKI MATSUOKA; Rin Kamishiro: YUKA INOKUCHI; Kaori Ibaraki: JUNKO NODA; Haruaki Akai: KOJI TSUJITANI; Yoshiro Nakamaru: RYO NAITO; Kazumi Matsuda: MASUMI ASANO

STORY Yuna transferred into Kazuki's class and instantly became the most sought-after girl in school. But she's set her sights on Kazuki—a total loser who has powerfully magical genes—and now all the guys are jealous of him!

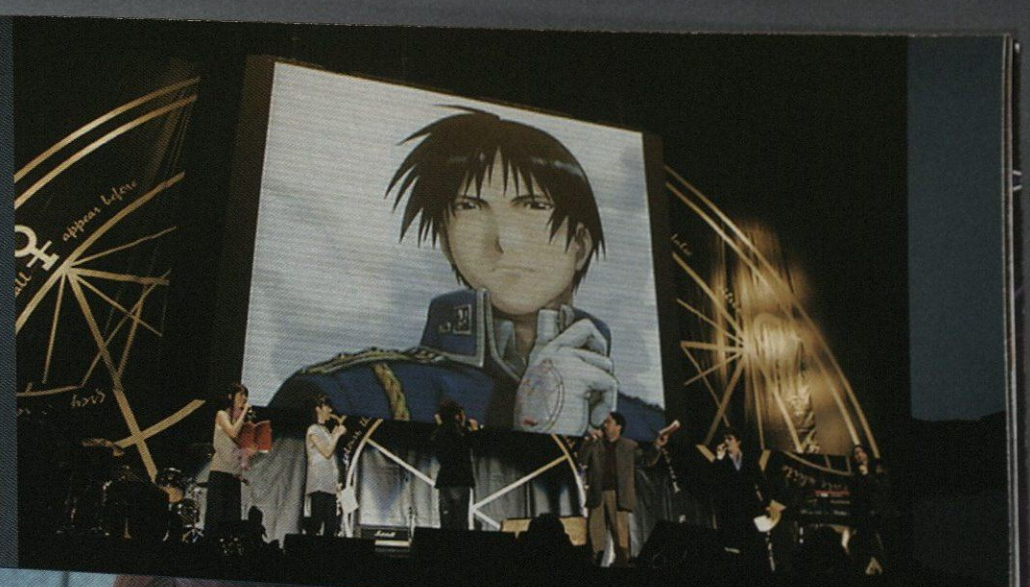
Yukihiko Nakamaru
Yukihiko is Kazuki's best friend, but he's the type of guy who puts getting the girl above friendship. He's also the sort to use magic to peek into the girls' dressing room. Unwilling to accept Kazuki and Yuna's relationship, he does his best to drive a wedge between them.
Raika Naruo
Raika is the editor in chief of the school newspaper, but her idea of good journalism is propaganda and rabble-rousing rhetoric. Her camera can take pictures of people's thoughts.
thing
EVERYDAY MAGIC
Shinichiro Kimura (director)
Maburaho is basically a love story, but there's one big difference between it and your run-of-the-mill romance—magic. Kimura says, "The craziness happens because of the magic, and I put a lot of love into figuring out ways to portray that. But it was difficult to decide where to use it. For instance, in a magical-girl show, magic would be used to solve problems. But in this show it's supposed to be normal, and it was hard to find ways to make using magic seem normal."

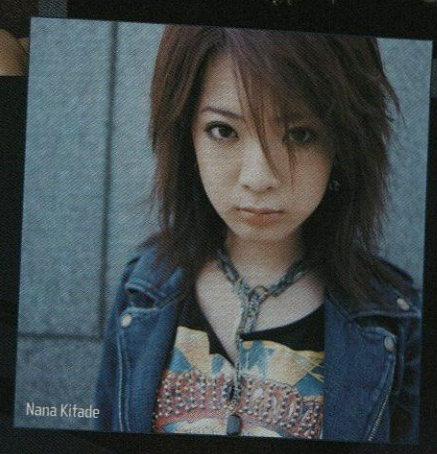


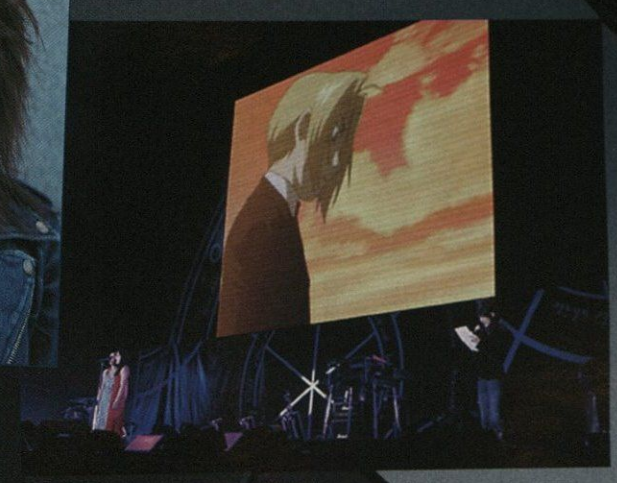
Sowelu

THE SHOW MAY BE OVER IN JAPAN, BUT LAST DECEMBER ***FULLMETAL*** FEVER SWEPT TOKYO DURING A FESTIVAL THAT ATTRACTED A STADIUM-SIZED CROWD

# METAL IDOLS




Nana Kitade



**EDWARD AND ALPHONSE** are still cute, but the hottest character at the Fullmetal Alchemist Festival was none other than Roy Mustang, whose dashing looks (not his fire-summoning abilities) made the ladies swoon. Every time Roy appeared on the giant screens of Yoyogi Arena, wild screams erupted from the female attendees. But there was more to the packed event than running clips from the hit series. Live performances of the popular opening and ending songs interspersed with appearances by the stellar voice cast also sent fans into a hyperactive frenzy.

On the music front, the guitar-wielding Nana Kitade kicked off with the super-catchy "Kesenai Tsumi," and Sowelu's beautiful voice induced goosebumps during her smooth R&B number "I Will." Before rocking out with "UNDO," COOL JOKE's frontman wooed the crowd. "Hey, Yoyogi babies!" he boomed. "Please give us your soul!" A more cultured vibe emerged with the appearance of Russian vocalists Anastasia and Veronika Golvina, who performed a moving operatic piece from the show's soundtrack. Sweet vocal harmonies of a more poppy variety continued later as YeLLOW Generation took to the stage with their "Tobira o Mukoue."

Not to be upstaged, *Fullmetal Alchemist's* voice cast captivated with bouts of charm and jovial banter. In a particularly hilarious segment, the main cast competed in a short script-reading contest that they had to clear within 30 seconds (the dialogue would normally be used in a DVD extra, albeit delivered at a much more sedate pace). Romi Park (Ed), Rie Kugimiya (Alphonse) and Megumi Toyoguchi (Winry) went up against Toru Ookawa (Roy Mustang), Keiji Fujiwara (Maes Hughes) and Mayumi Yamaguchi (Envy). When Ookawa's team lost, his punishment was to perform his character's song, "Tsuki no Uragawa," for the crowd. During the enthusiastically received number, Park and Yamaguchi flanked the actor, adopting campy rock and air-guitar poses.

In other, more dramatic proceedings, the voice actors narrated highlight footage of their respective characters, but the high points were during key scenes where they lip-synched with the on-screen action. A telephone conversation between Mustang and Hughes (complete with a phone-line compression audio effect) provided an eye-opening glimpse of the actors at work. Even more impressive were scenes involving a prerecorded character, requiring precision timing from the actors. One scene took place in a car, and dialogue between Ed and Mustang had to incorporate prerecorded lines from the driver. It was flawlessly delivered and utterly mesmerizing.

A teaser trailer for the much-anticipated *Fullmetal* movie, ***Fullmetal Alchemist: The Conqueror of Shamballa*** (coming to theaters in Japan this summer), was also screened. Taped comments by BONES president Masahiko Minami, director Seiji Mizushima and actress Romi Park dropped a few hints of what to expect. The theme is pure love and miscommunication of feelings, and the "Shambala" of the title refers to "paradise." The theme song will be performed by L'Arc~en~Ciel—the brand-new track is currently in the works. After that announcement, the band stormed the arena as surprise guests, and they brought the house down with a scorching rendition of "READY STEADY GO!" Front man hyde prowled the stage to the delight of the front row, and the rest of the band was on fire—the booming bass and drums were so powerful that you could feel the rumble traveling up your legs to settle in the base of your belly. After the closing ceremony, Park announced that a ***Fullmetal Alchemist*** attraction was slated for Universal Studios Japan. At the behest of her colleagues, the event finished with her singing "Ashita e no Basho," which Park admitted to practicing backstage in case she lost the script-reading competition. Good thing that number didn't go to waste!

## CLOSING COMMENTS

Not only did the Fullmetal Alchemist Festival take place in Tokyo; it also traveled to Osaka, with two shows a day in both instances. How do the voice actors feel upon its completion? Here's what they had to say during a meeting with the press after the final Tokyo event:

**Romi Park:** I'm so impressed that all of the staff and cast worked on this live event together; I felt a different sense of unity from doing TV animation. Come to the theater and see the movie!

**Rie Kugimiya:** At first I thought the stage was too big; I didn't know what to do! But now I feel a sense of achievement.

**Megumi Toyoguchi:** For this event, our [the voice actors'] ideas were included, as well as the stage director's. The feelings of the cast members were expressed at the event, so I'm satisfied. The audience was so warm; thank you for coming!

**Toru Ookawa:** I was taken aback when I heard that we would be doing a live event in front of 10,000 people. But after finishing, I'm glad that I was able to be a part of it. It was so fun! I would like to thank all of the people who love ***Fullmetal Alchemist***!

**Keiji Fujiwara:** I was so tense, especially being the MC. We don't usually have to stand in front of an audience. Because of this event, we were able to see the fans' reactions directly, and I really felt the popularity of this show. I heard from the director that I will be appearing in the movie, so please come and see it!

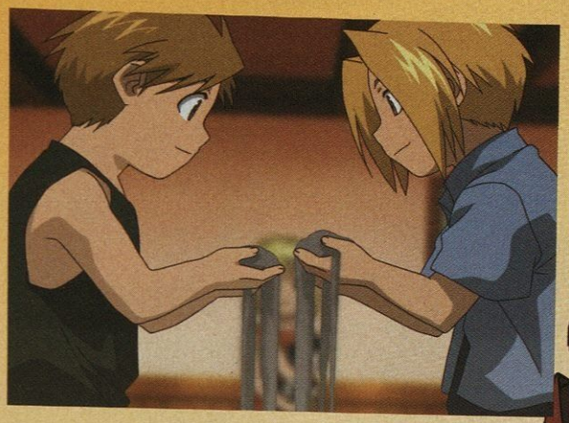
**Mayumi Yamaguchi:** I was so tense at first about acting on such a big stage, but after today's second event, I felt really good. I'm on a kind of natural high now. Thank you very much!



an Send
PLEASE DO NOT UNPLUG

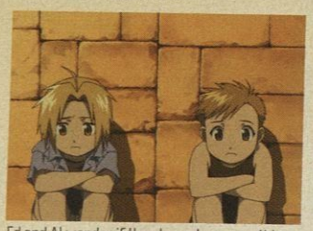
# The Long and Winding Road

**Ed and Al have already come a long way on their difficult journey. Let's retrace their footsteps and see where they've been!**



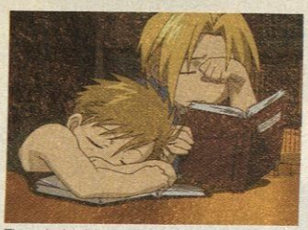
## Continental Calendar 1905
### Edward: 6 years old, Alphonse: 5 years old

Winry nervously watches the brothers prepare for their first transmutation.



Ed and Al wonder if they have done something wrong.

Ed is depressed to learn that his younger brother Al is taller than he is.



They study alchemy day and night, and sometimes they can't fight off sleep.

### Winry
(Age 6)
Winry is the Elric brothers' closest friend, and the sight of their first transmutation frightened her. Her family lives nearby and gets together with the Elrics often.

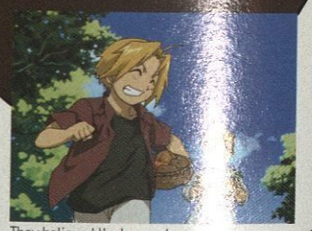
### First transmutation
(Episode 3)
Ed and Al's first successful experiment with alchemy was when they transmuted a gift for their friend Winry. Unfortunately, the whole alchemic process freaked Winry out, but Ed and Al's mother later complimented their efforts with a smile. Since that incident, Ed and Al have devoted themselves to the study of alchemy. All they ever wanted was to see their mother's smile.

## Continental Calendar 19[illegible]
### Edward: 10 years old, Alphonse[illegible]ears old

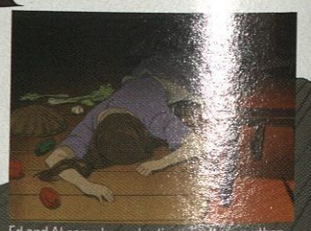
### The death of th[illegible]mother
(Episode 3)
The young brothers' [illegible]free lives came screeching to a [illegible]ll when their mother fell ill. As she [illegible]mpled her husband's name in de[illegible]um, the boys realized why she had [illegible]ed so happy to see them performing alchemy—it reminded her of Ed and Al's father, who left home and never came back. Their hatred for their father and love for their mother eventually led them to try to resurrect her.

### Trisha Elric
Ed and Al's mother always looked after them with great love and care. Behind her cheerful smile, she longed for her husband to return as she endured the pain of illness.

Their father left home when the[illegible]were too young to remember.

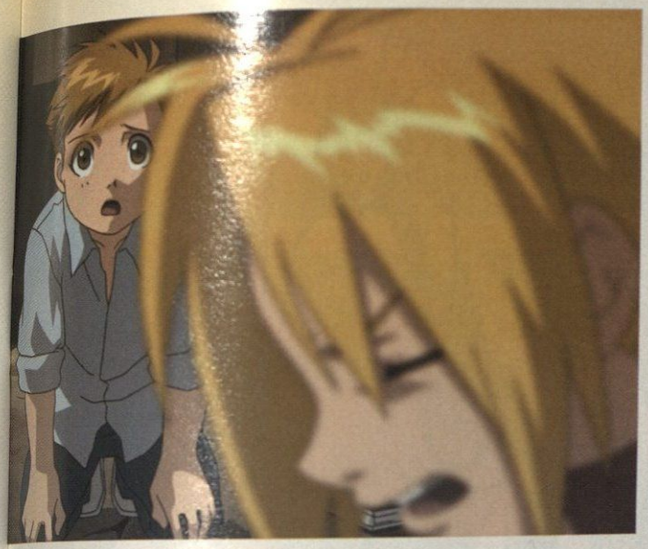


They believed the happy days [illegible]never end...



Ed and Al come home to discover their mother collapsed on the floor.

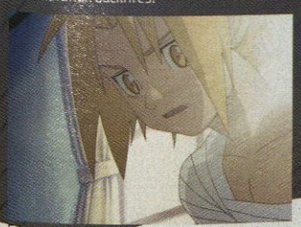
The brothers dedicated themselves to caring for their sick mother, but nothing helped.



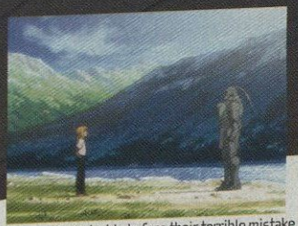
## Continental Calendar 1910
### Edward: 11 years old, Alphonse: 10 years old

Al is nearly lost forever when their human transmutation backfires.

Ed sacrifices his arm to save his brother.

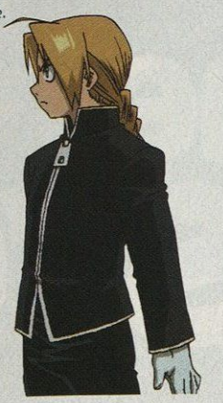


Ed makes up his mind to wear Auto-Mail, despite the tremendous pain.



The brothers decide to face their terrible mistake.

### A nearly fatal mistake
(Episode 3)
Performing alchemy means abiding by the rule of equivalent exchange. As such, Ed and Al had to give up something worth the same as their mother's life, which was obviously impossible because there's no way they could have found any combination of things equal to their mother. The brothers overlooked this in their attempt to transmute a human, and they paid the price. Each of them blamed himself for the tragic mistake, but together they decided to move on in order to recover what they lost.



#### Edward
(Age 11)
After losing his leg to the botched human transmutation, Edward sacrifices his right arm in order to bind his brother's soul to a suit of armor. His mechanized limbs symbolize the price he paid for their mistake. He usually hides them under his clothes.

## Continental Calendar 1911
### Edward: 12 years old, Alphonse: 11 years old

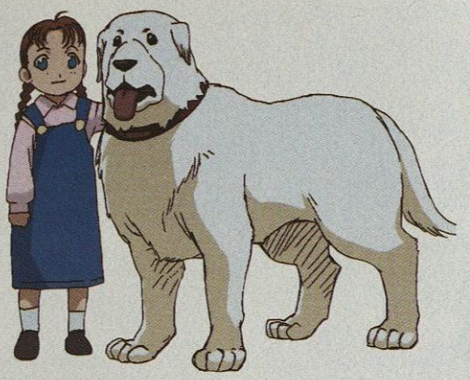
The Elric brothers get caught up in some trouble on their way to Central City.

Colonel Mustang suggests that Ed try to become a State Alchemist.

Ed's aptitude is tested on the way to Central City.

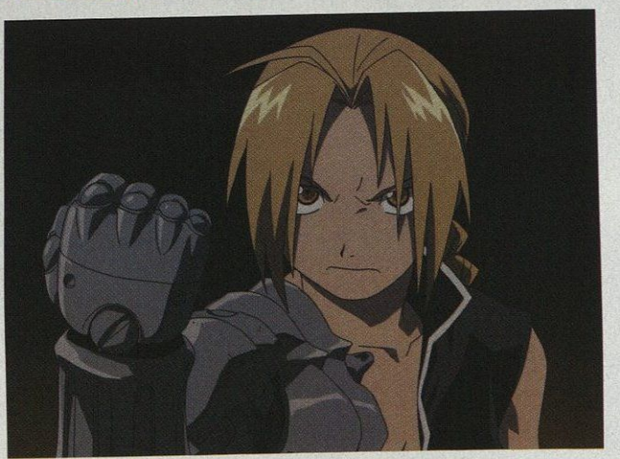
Ed faces the harsh reality of a true military dictatorship.

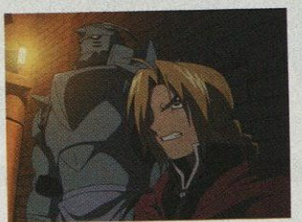
#### Nina and Alexander
Nina is the daughter of Shou Tucker, the man known as the Sewing-Life Alchemist. Their pet dog Alexander has always been a great companion to Nina. The Elric brothers stayed with the Tuckers until the day of the State Alchemist examination, and Nina treated Ed and Al like her real brothers.



### The courage to persevere
(Episodes 4, 5 & 6)
After the tragedy, the Elric brothers burned their house down and left their hometown. They headed for Central City, believing that by becoming State Alchemists, they could find some way to get their bodies back to normal. But the exam is so tough that only a few pass it each year, and the brothers knew that if they became State Alchemists, they would be branded as dogs of the military. Still, their resolve was strong, and they weren't going to change their minds.

## Continental Calendar 1914
### Edward: 15 years old, Alphonse: 14 years old





Sometimes they have to resort to violence in their quest to find the Philosopher's Stone.

### Their ongoing quest
(Episodes 1 & 2)
Ed passed the exam and became the youngest State Alchemist in history. Three years have passed since then, and despite the occasional detour by order of the Army, Ed and Al continue their search for the Philosopher's Stone, an item that could hold the key to changing their bodies back to normal. They sometimes encounter hardships and suffer from depression and injuries, but they're growing up as they continue on their journey.

### Roy Mustang

Mustang, also known as the Flame Alchemist, is a colonel in the State Army. He's a calculating man who won't hesitate to make sacrifices in order to fulfill his ambition. Mustang is the one who suggested that Ed become a State Alchemist in the first place. Could that be part of his scheme?

### Edward Elric

Edward became a State Alchemist to find a way to recover his limbs and his brother Al's body, which were lost while performing a human transmutation. During the State Alchemist exam, Ed used alchemy *without* a transmutation circle, a feat that allowed him to obtain his license at the young age of 12.

# At the Crossroads

***Fullmetal Alchemist's* supporting characters hold important clues as to where the story will go next...**

### Scar

Scar is a tall and burly man whose past is shrouded in mystery. His nickname comes from the fact that he has a scar on his forehead. Despite his hatred for the State Alchemists, he has a tattoo on his right arm that looks like some kind of transmutation circle.

# FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST

**STORY** Ed and Al loved their mother so much that when she died, they used forbidden alchemy to resurrect her (the attempt failed). But human transmutation is forbidden for a reason, and they paid the price with their own flesh. Now the brothers are on a quest to find the Philosopher's Stone, which could give them back their bodies.

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www.fullmetalalchemist.com
www.sonymusic.co.jp/Animation/hagaren
illustrated by HIROKO OGURI
finished by MIHO KOBAYASHI
background by KAZUYUKI HASHIMOTO (KUSANAGI)
text by DAISUKE HIRAKIDA
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**STAFF** creator: HIROMU ARAKAWA; director: SEIJI MIZUSHIMA; story editor: SHO AIKAWA; character design: YOSHIYUKI ITO; main animator: KOJI SUGIURA; production design: SHINJI ARAMAKI; art design: HIDEYASU NARITA; chimera design: JUNYA ISHIGAKI; art director: KAZUYUKI HASHIMOTO; color design: SHIHOKO NAKAYAMA; filming director: SUSUMU FUKUSHI; sound effects director: MASAFUMI MIMA; music: MICHIRU OSHIMA; production: MAINICHI BROADCAST, ANIPLEX & BONES

**CAST** Edward Elric: ROMI PARK; Alphonse Elric: RIE KUGIMIYA; Roy Mustang: TORU OKAWA; Alex Louis Armstrong: KENJI UTSUMI; Riza Hawkeye: MICHIKO NEYA; Maes Hughes: KEIJI FUJIWARA; Lust: YUKO SATO; Gluttony: YASUHIRO TAKATO; Pinako Rockbell: MIYOKO ASO; Winry Rockbell: MEGUMI TOYOGUCHI; Scar: RYOTARO OKIAYU

## What it means to be a State Alchemist

Edward is determined to achieve his goal. He will do anything to restore his brother Alphonse to his real body. That's why he became a State Alchemist—even though he knew that people would call him a dog of the military. Without his unflinching resolve, Ed couldn't have passed the test and obtained his license at just 12 years old. But the strength of Ed's will is once again put to the test when he encounters the man they know as Scar.

Scar's hatred for State Alchemists runs deep, but why? What makes him hold such a strong grudge? Does the tattoo on his arm have something to do with it? Details are still unclear, but one thing's certain—he rejects all alchemists and denies their right to practice alchemy, which means that someday, his hatred will be directed toward Ed.

Ed has just become a State Alchemist, so he doesn't yet comprehend the full meaning of his new silver pocket watch. He's too young to understand the fact that his research could be used for weapons development, or that he could even end up fighting on the front lines. Ed is not like Mustang, who knows what it means to be a soldier, but someday he too will understand the reality.

A certain incident connects Ed and Scar, and their meeting gives Ed a chance to ask himself what it means to be a State Alchemist. He will also discover what it means to be human and learn that he cannot let the chain of his watch bind his soul. Even if Ed ends up tossing out his watch and giving up his status, the person closest to him will always know that Ed is the one and only Fullmetal Alchemist.

## WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Lust is a shady lady who's identified only by the ouroboros symbol on her chest. Her objective is unclear, but Edward's exceptional alchemic skills have not escaped her notice. We know that she has some kind of connection to the fake Philosopher's Stone found in Lior, so her meeting with Ed in the city couldn't have been a mere coincidence. What will happen when they meet again?



It seems Lust was behind the shocking incident in Lior.

[inside]
Bee Train



*MADLAX* is the latest girls-with-guns anime from Bee Train. In the story, the mercenary Madlax and the daughter of an aristocrat, Margaret Burton, are connected by a shared dark past.

# DANGEROUS LIAISONS

## Creating the mysteries of *MADLAX*

Bee Train's latest work to arrive Stateside is a tale of intrigue spanning two nations. In Asia's civil war-torn Gazth-sonika, the eponymous female mercenary takes on risky missions involving anything from information retrieval to assassinations—tasks that more often than not leave a trail of collateral damage and bodies. In Europe's Nafrece, an aristocrat's daughter named Margaret Burton lives in the lap of luxury. Both harbor a past locked away in their subconscious. Mashimo explains, "The story is about portraying the inner struggles of people, while showing what life is like in a place of madness and this other place of peace." Even the title suggests the two extremes—the combination of "mad" and "lax" ("like being relaxed," he says).

The development process with producer Kitayama and scriptwriter Yosuke Kuroda involved "impassioned meetings, debating the mysteries of each character." Even more than its predecessor *Noir*, *MADLAX*'s fragmented narrative tantalizingly coalesces like a jigsaw puzzle, but Mashimo stresses that meticulously mapping out a complex plot and characterization is enough to captivate a sophisticated and well-read audience. "You have to take it one step further and bring in something that goes beyond imagination." The trick, he says, is to go out drinking and shoot the breeze. "After all the meetings and serious discussions, just put it out of your mind. A little drunkenness and small talk brings out incredible ideas—just in the course of normal conversation—and they aren't the kind of ideas you get by planning or thinking logically. The point is to take those ideas and work them into the story somehow." Case in point (and beware, we're venturing into possible spoiler territory): Mashimo ing really abnormal things." But during a brainstorming session with Kitayama and Kuroda, the latter pointed out that the normal way of portraying that type of character would be to imbue her with the usual split personality or paranoia traits, but why not just split the protagonist into two different people instead? "When I heard it, I thought, 'wow,'" Mashimo recalls. The approach reminded him of an art technique (called *ijidozu* in Japan), which depicts a sequence of actions performed by a character over a length of time against a single background. "I'd never tried doing anything like that in animation before," he remarks, "but I thought, why shouldn't we try having one person as two in the same space? I think it's a first for anime."

Costume design was a big issue for Ohsawa, who handled character design and animation direction. "I don't have any sense when it comes to clothing or accessories," he says. Sometimes when he got stuck, three or four days passed without a single drawing being produced. (Mashimo counters: "He's got an incredible range of ideas, and he's fast, too.") Ohsawa initially drew inspiration from fashion catalogs Mashimo handed over as well as his suggestions, but he admits the process became too troublesome. "I suppose the director thought the real items [I modeled the clothing after] probably existed somewhere," he says of the results, "but I can tell you they were complete fabrications." He notes that Madlax exudes a certain "girlishness" with her penchant for brand-name clothing (indeed, in the first episode, she takes out an armored platoon in a dress more suited for a posh cocktail party). "She would rip the clothing without even thinking twice about it, but it was evident that her clothing absolutely could *not* look cheap, so I really focused hard on that aspect." at the producer's image of combat attire, namely the hot pants that make up Madlax's "standard" gear in the field. "Would you really want to expose your thighs like that? All it takes is a leaf or something to give you a cut or scrape, so who in their right mind would wear shorts into battle?" he laughs. ("Yeah, but whose idea was the dress?" Kitayama retorts. "*Not mine*!")

**"*MADLAX* is about portraying the inner struggles of people, while showing what life is like in a place of madness and this other place of peace."**

Ohsawa considers himself an animator first and foremost. "All I'm really interested in is how to make other people's pictures move." On *MADLAX* and other shows, he says the challenge lies in portraying the character's humanity within the context of the story's fictional reality. "You have to think about how they gesture and how to get those kinds of things across." Having started his career working on US cartoons and their full-motion animation methodology, the limited animation technique of anime presents certain hurdles. "People never just sit there frozen in time. It just doesn't happen." Despite the limitations, he has to maintain a naturalistic performance and keep each cast member's actions in character. As an example, he cites animating the pistol-packing lead's body language during combat. "Action always ends up being a masculine kind of behavior, doesn't it?" he says. "Like, when you crouch down, your knees go outward and your crotch is exposed. I really had to pay a lot of attention to make sure that

## SATOSHI OHSAWA

**Title**
Animation director and character designer

**Date of birth**
September 22, 1966

**How did you break into the anime business?**
A coincidence. It just sort of happened. There was a point in my life where I didn't have anything better to do, so I thought, why not go to a technical school? I didn't have any particular love of anime. Anyway, the more I did it, the more fun it seemed. I finished school; one of my friends landed a job before I did, and he got me in. I first started out doing [in-between] animation.

**First job**
The first project I worked on was a collaboration [on US cartoons] called ***TigerSharks***, as well as ***ThunderCats*** and stuff. For the first year or so, the only things I worked on were foreign shows.

**Best and worst things about your job**
The best part is that I get to express many different characters in many different ways, not only using my own art but also the art of other people, and I get to match it to the project and animate it how I see fit. The most interesting part of the entire process is thinking about how to best portray each particular character. The worst parts are everything else. I certainly don't like everything about my job.

**Biggest influences, anime or otherwise**
I feel like I'm influenced by every single thing that exists in society, whether it's manga or anime or movies, or anything I happen to be able to see at the moment. All these things influence me in ways I'm not even conscious of, that's why it's hard to single out any one thing. There are tons of novelists and manga authors I like, and tons of things [within those books] that don't come from the people who write them. It's just something I can't really say with any kind of clarity or precision.

**If you could do anything else, what would you do?**
I would want to do absolutely nothing. I don't mean that in a simplistic sense, like being lazy. I want to observe all kinds of things and learn how they move. Not just people, but the movement of animals and various other kinds of movement. That'd be the best. And of course in order to do that [you can't be moving yourself, so] you have no choice but to be doing nothing at the time.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

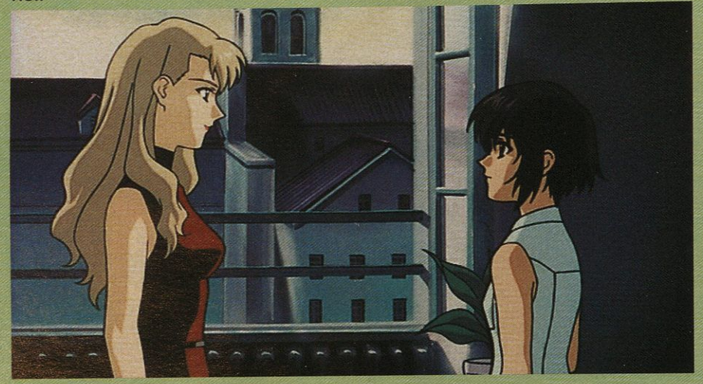
"I felt like I had grasped the character of Kirika for the first time. I also thought I was probably the only person who really got it." Mashimo tells us that though the titles aren't directly related, he's always envisioned ***Noir*** and ***MADLAX*** as part of a trilogy of works featuring pistol-packing babes. He tells us that he already has a successor to ***MADLAX*** in mind. (Though judging by the double takes all around the table, it has yet to be confirmed—you heard it here first...)

### Art versus commerce

Mashimo's unique take on the business extends to its future as well. He observes that the industry is likely to become increasingly polarized into two camps, the first of which focuses solely on market research. "Whether it's movies, animation or what have you, there's this idea that if we do this or that, we'll have a hit." It's a methodology he'd rather avoid. "You might make some very polished shows, but they end up not necessarily being so interesting." The other camp will place high value on the creative staff. Looking at the latest crop of new talent in TV animation, he comments that young creators are striving for interesting content over the traditional bottom line of high ratings. "Today's young people are taking the time to look at the world and voice their opinions about it. They have a kind of creativity that stands on its own, free and unfettered. If we don't nurture that, we'll end up right back where we started," he says. While Hollywood also has its share of young mavericks, he remarks that the industry is still very conservative when it comes to animation. "In Japan, we have the influence of manga, among other things, and there's a lot of brilliant talent out there just starting to bloom. I think that's fantastic."

His plans for the studio are surprisingly open-ended. "I couldn't care less," Mashimo replies—by which he means there's nothing to worry about. "Bee Train will grow just fine as the hospital-style studio it is." Obviously, he'll be displeased if things go awry and the operation becomes overtly commercial. "On the other hand, if Bee Train *is* the 'hospital,' and it hatches new generations of young and talented creators, then that'd be great. But that's not the reason I'm doing this." So why is Mashimo in the anime biz? "The basic assumption is that people all over the world, not just in Japan and the US, but people all over the world, will be watching our shows, right? If that's the case, then I'd like to meet with some of those people. I have tons of questions I want to ask them. If we get together like that, then all kinds of different people will get a chance to meet—crossing national boundaries. And then we can work to create things together. I think the promise of that is much more important than this company or that vision' of one particular stud

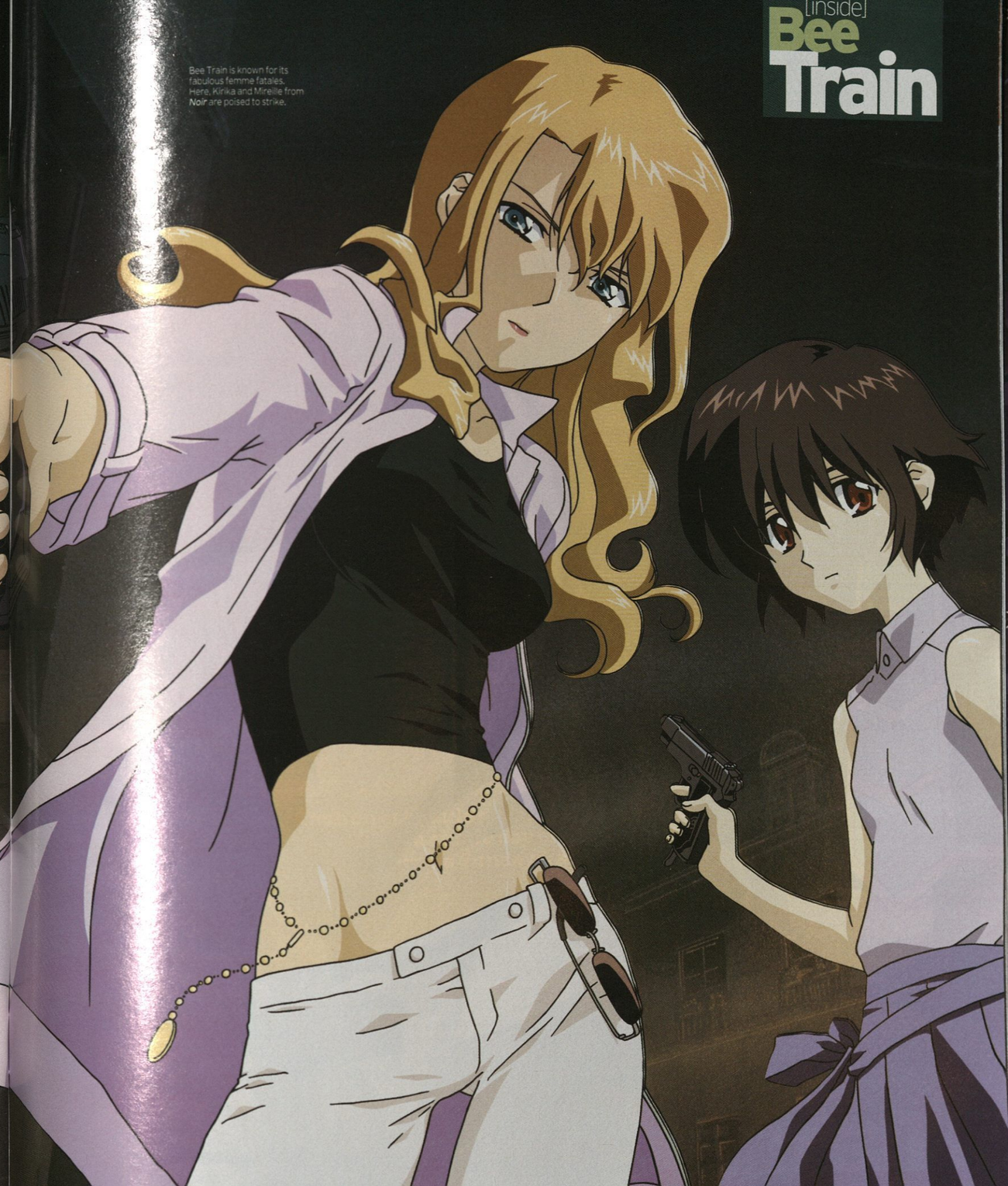
### Noir



## SOUND SYSTEM

After being impressed with the depth and talent of her work on ***Eat-Man***, Bee Train has worked with musician Yuki Kajiura on several titles—***Noir***, ***MADLAX*** and the multiple incarnations of ***.hack***. Mashimo gushes that she's much more than just a composer: "She's a storyteller who just happens to know how to write music." When collaborating on a project, Mashimo forgoes the music talk, and instead they discuss the characters, the theme of the show, the plot—things like that. "This isn't really the kind of discussion a director would normally have with his composer; I guess you could call it planning and script-writing." The fact that she's extremely well-read only adds to their seamless collaboration, which includes story suggestions by Kajiura. "She's got a great imagination, and even if I discuss something with her using complex language, she immediately understands what I'm getting at and gets right to work."

[inside] Bee Train



Bee Train is known for its fabulous femme fatales. Here, Kirika and Mireille from ***Noir*** are poised to strike.

It's a game. It's an anime. It's an anime about a game that's also a game within a game (that comes packaged with anime OVAs). ***.hack*** is a mind-bending, multimedia romp through the world of "The World," a massively multiplayer online RPG where players soon find that their avatars are affecting offline reality in unexpected—and dangerous—ways.

[inside]
# Bee Train

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

## Animating *.hack*

While the studio's credits include other video game adaptations such as the Western-themed ***Wild Arms*** and girls' dating sim ***Meine Liebe*** (which recently aired in Japan), the ***.hack*** series is arguably Bee Train's most ambitious project, due to its unique multifaceted approach. Using traditional online role-playing games as the base, the anime was split between an OVA series depicting the actual game players in the real world and a TV show that would largely take place within the virtual world.

The idea came about during the PS2 game's development. Bandai noticed that the latest juggernaut RPGs like ***Final Fantasy*** and ***Dragon Quest*** flew off the shelves upon release, only to drop dramatically in sales after a month. Shin Unozawa, the general manager of Bandai's game department, suggested that they divide ***.hack*** into four parts and release them in three-month intervals, the idea being to keep sales constant throughout the year.

"They were still worried it might not sell, so someone suggested making four animated films, one to go with each game," recalls Mashimo of ***.hack//Liminality's*** origin. But Bandai felt the need to bolster their project with something more, hence the decision to produce ***.hack//SIGN***, a TV series timed to air with the game's release. The production schedule was relentless; on top of directing both projects, Mashimo was also in the midst of developing ***Noir*** with producer Shigeru Kitayama at Victor Entertainment. "I didn't have a single day off for a year and a half—no Saturdays, no Sundays, no holidays, nothing!" he sighs. "That was a first for me. The only compensation was going out with Kitayama...all we did was drink, drink, drink! We'd drink until morning!"

He wasn't the only one in a pinch. "It's pretty unusual for anyone but CLAMP to use Yoshiyuki Sadamoto's art, isn't it?" comments animation director Satoshi Ohsawa, who fretted about bringing character designs by the famed ***Evangelion*** and ***FLCL*** artist to life as well as the fan response. "Part of me was wondering how on earth I got stuck with [the job], but of course they say the higher the hurdles, the more worthwhile the challenge. I resigned myself to the fact that people would complain, and decided to go ahead and take a crack at it."

He needn't have worried; the ***.hack*** world proved popular and continued to grow with additional anime as well as a manga series. Mashimo teasingly mentions that there's more to come. "It's this huge project, you see, and there's a lot of speculation about what's going to happen, but we're proceeding slowly with it."

### .hack

**The production schedule on *.hack//SIGN* was relentless. "I didn't have a single day off for a year and a half—no Saturdays, no Sundays, no holidays!"**

## Girls and guns

They're regarded as Bee Train's signature works, and ***Noir*** and ***MADLAX*** share a common thread—heat-packing femme fatales with mysterious pasts who embark on a journey to recover their lost memories. Which raises the question: Does Mashimo have a thing for women with firearms?

"Who told you I liked girls with guns?!" Mashimo demands, protesting vehemently. "It doesn't matter whether it's in fiction or reality...I don't want girls to have guns!" Instead, he points the finger at Shigeru Kitayama, the producer of both shows, who's laughing on the other side of the table. "Oi! Kitayama, here...it's not that he likes girls *with* guns, per se. He just likes girls *and* guns!" For Mashimo, the appeal was having characters that have to act without hesitation while surrounded by danger.

Ohsawa admits they aren't his cup of tea either. "The point is that when I draw them, I'm not trying to make them all strong and badass," he says. It's quite the opposite. "I'm trying to bring out their vulnerability and force a comparison between the frailness of a woman and the gun—the symbol of power she holds in her hand. That's the key to these kinds of characters."

She may be deadly, but Ohsawa says *Noir's* Kirika is still adorable. "People probably respond less to the larger-than-life gun-wielding aspects than they do to the fact that she leaves a very lasting impression as a 16-year-old girl, and they probably see her as someone they want to embrace." Ohsawa admits he secretly schemed to bail out of the project after working on ***Noir's*** first episode because the series' demands seemed so overwhelming. He actually considered declining the job at the outset, but was ultimately won over by an exchange between the professional assassin Mireille and the amnesiac Kirika later in the series, where the former quotes the literary luminary Ernest Hemingway.

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## KOUICHI MASHIMO

**Title**
President and director

**Date of birth**
June 21, 1952

**How did you break into the anime business?**
When I was still a student, I was messing around with Leica cameras because of influence from my father. Then I made commercials—but commercials are pretty short, right? I wanted to try making something a bit longer, so I wrote up a script. Around that time I became acquainted with Tatsunoko Production and joined the company as an assistant director. Many people who entered animation around the time had been doing manga before, but for me it was photography and films, so the learning curve was about three times as steep as it was for everyone else.

**First job**
***Time Bokan***, [an SF gag comedy] directed by Hiroshi Sasagawa. Doesn't that tell you something about my personality? [laughs]

**Best and worst things about your job**
What I like is watching the staff mature as they shed bitter tears because they can't make something work. Honestly, they'll bust out into tears about it sometimes. It moves me to see that, because I know it's a sign of their devotion [to the creative process]. What I hate is not having any time. I have no time for myself.

**If you could go back and remake one of your titles, which and why?**
I don't remake. You only get one chance to perform an operation.

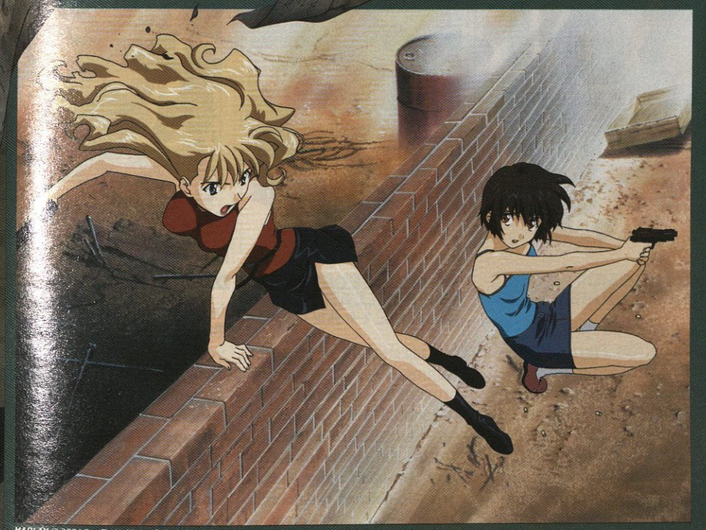
**Biggest influences, anime or otherwise**
I have two. One is traveling to foreign places and walking down dangerous unknown streets. I used to really love doing that, up until about a year ago. Now this is a bit peculiar, but we're building a loft-style studio in Karuizawa [in Nagano prefecture], and I'm enjoying that.

**If you could do anything else, what would you do?**
I'd like to meet [famous photographers] Richard Avedon, Jeanloup Sieff and Helmut Newton. Back when I was in school, Richard Avedon had a photo exhibit; I went there and actually shook his hand and got his autograph. And these guys are already dead, but [I'd love to meet] John Ford and [Alfred] Hitchcock. Not when they're working of course, but when they're out drinking!

# [inside] Bee Train

**WHAT DOES A HOSPITAL HAVE IN COMMON WITH AN ANIME STUDIO? AT BEE TRAIN, CARING FOR ANIME—AND THE PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE IT—IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE BOTTOM LINE.**

text by AMOS WONG



*MADLAX* © 2004 Bee Train•Victor Entertainment
*Noir* ©2001 Ryoe Tsukimura / Bee Train / Victor Entertainment
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Think of Bee Train not as one of the hottest animation studios in Japan, but as a hospital for animators. You see, after Bee Train president Kouichi Mashimo survived a skiing accident two decades ago and spent time in the intensive care unit, he aspired to start a studio built on human interest instead of corporate concerns. "I ran into a tree, and my heart collided with my lung," Mashimo explains, adding, "I really got a sense of how truly easy it is for a person to die."

At the time he was a director at Tatsunoko Production, and all the nurses teased him about it after they found out. "On the PA system, they'd say, 'Calling Gatchaman! It's time for your medicine!'" he laughs. Having worked at Tatsunoko for nine and a half years, Mashimo vowed that if he made it out of the ICU, he would create his own projects and forge new experiences. Post-discharge, he stayed in touch with his caregivers and went on social outings with the hospital staff. On one such occasion, there was a heated discussion amongst the group over work ethics. Mashimo said that in animation, he believed there were three basic principles of getting ahead: 1) Is the money good? 2) Is the work good? and 3) Are the people good? "Our rule is that if at least one of the three is good, then you should take the job." In response, a young doctor in the group decided to share *their* principles as doctors: Take away the patient's pain, research illnesses within an area of specialty, and pass knowledge on to the next generation. This left Mashimo speechless, and he soon adopted new principles that were more in line with the doctor's. "If all a hospital ever cared about was making money, it'd be terrible, wouldn't it?"

After leaving Tatsunoko, he founded Mashimo Jimusho, an office with a small staff that freelanced for a variety of studios. But after a decade of that, he wanted something more. A casual conversation with Production I.G boss Mitsuhisa Ishikawa was all it took to establish Bee Train in 1997 as I.G's second subsidiary (after XEBEC). Mashimo applied his studio-as-hospital approach to Bee Train, creating a studio with a less corporate-like mission, one that values nurturing young staff to become great animators and producing stimulating works that aren't just about raking in the cash.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

# GOTTA GET IT GiveaWays

## A

**1 TO GIVE AWAY!**

**» AUTOGRAPH**

### BEE TRAIN

You've already fallen in love with their animated masterpieces, now win these one-of-a-kind autographs from director Kouichi Mashimo and character designer Satoshi Ohsawa of Bee Train, the studio that brought you ***Noir***, ***MADLAX*** and ***.hack//SIGN***!

## B

**» DVD**

### GENEON PRIZE PACK

Diversity is a gift, and this month we're giving it to you anime-style! Whether the hulking giant robots of ***New Getter Robo*** get your blood flowing, the hardcore melodrama of ***Koi Kaze*** kicks you in the gut, or the hilarious hijinks of ***Daphne in the Brilliant Blue*** tickle your fancy, Geneon's DVD prize pack has you covered!

**10 TO GIVE AWAY!**

*Koi Kaze* Based on the manga "KOIKAZE" by MOTOI YOSHIDA originally serialized in the EVENING published by Kodansha Ltd. © 2004 MOTOI YOSHIDA•KODANSHA/ KOIKAZE-PARTNERSHIP
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## C

**» MANGA**

### THE TAROT CAFÉ VOLUME 1

Coffee and crumpets are the last things you'll find at this darkly magical café. Instead, a lovely gothic lass will reveal your future for a price. But don't let that frighten you. If you're lucky, your future just may contain a free copy of this hot new manga from your friends at TOKYOPOP.

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**5 TO GIVE AWAY!**

## D

**» DVD**

### GRAVION ZWEI VOLUME 1 + ARTBOX

When a gang of maids and a couple of teen boys pilot the components of a giant combining robot, big fun is on the horizon. Fan service? Check. Mass destruction? Oh yeah! A DVD with a wicked cool artbox? Don't get ahead of yourself; first send in the giveaway card!

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**5 TO GIVE AWAY!**

## E

**» TOY**

### RANGE MURATA MINI-FIGURE SET

Range Murata's (***Last Exile***, ***Spy Fiction***) illustrations spring into the third dimension with this finely crafted set of six figures based on his most recent art collection. Standing between 2" and 4" tall, each one screams of cutting-edge design and retro-future chic.

Image courtesy of Diamond Comics

**1 TO GIVE AWAY!**

## F

**» DVD**

### SHINGU: SECRET OF THE STELLAR WARS VOLUME 1 + ARTBOX

Life is relaxed for young Hajime, a second-year student at a Japanese middle school. Even when an alien enrolls at the institution, Hajime remains chill. However, when the student council president attacks said alien using psychic powers, Hajime is forced to take action!

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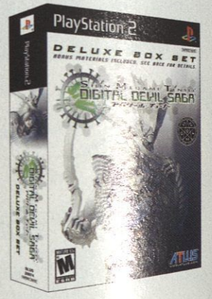
**5 TO GIVE AWAY!**

## G




**» GAME**

### DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA

In the world of the *Megami Tensei* series, it's OK to eat your enemies. In fact, it's encouraged. As Nerph, leader of the Daryon tribe, you must lead your party to Nirvana by battling rival factions. With over 50 hours of gameplay, winning this is sure to keep your PS2 humming!

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**3 TO GIVE AWAY!**

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**» MANGA**

### BY THE SWORD VOLUME 1

Riddle us this: What do you get when you send a badass swordsman, a naïve young girl and her demon pappy on a journey? Well, in ***By the Sword***, you get a rollicking action title in which our threesome must unlock the strange secrets of a legendary sword to do battle with some powerful demons.

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**5 TO GIVE AWAY!**

## I

**» DVD**

### CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL VOLUME 1 + ARTBOX

So you're thinking about enrolling at Cromartie High. It wouldn't hurt to look like a rock star or be a stout robot. And it'd be wise to develop a taste for pencil shavings. That's how the kids do it in this crazy comedy. This set includes Vol. 1 of the manga!

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**5 TO GIVE AWAY!**

## J

**» DVD**

### MAGICAL MEOW MEOW TARUTO VOLUME 1

Cat girls. Magic. Dark machinations and mystery. Welcome to the fantastical plight of Taruto, a female feline who's forced into battle, armed with adorable looks and magical powers, to save her entire race. It's the perfect addition to your collection of cutesy titles—and you could get it for free!

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**10 TO GIVE AWAY!**

## K

**» MANGA**

### SEVEN SEAS THREE-PACK

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**3 TO GIVE AWAY!**

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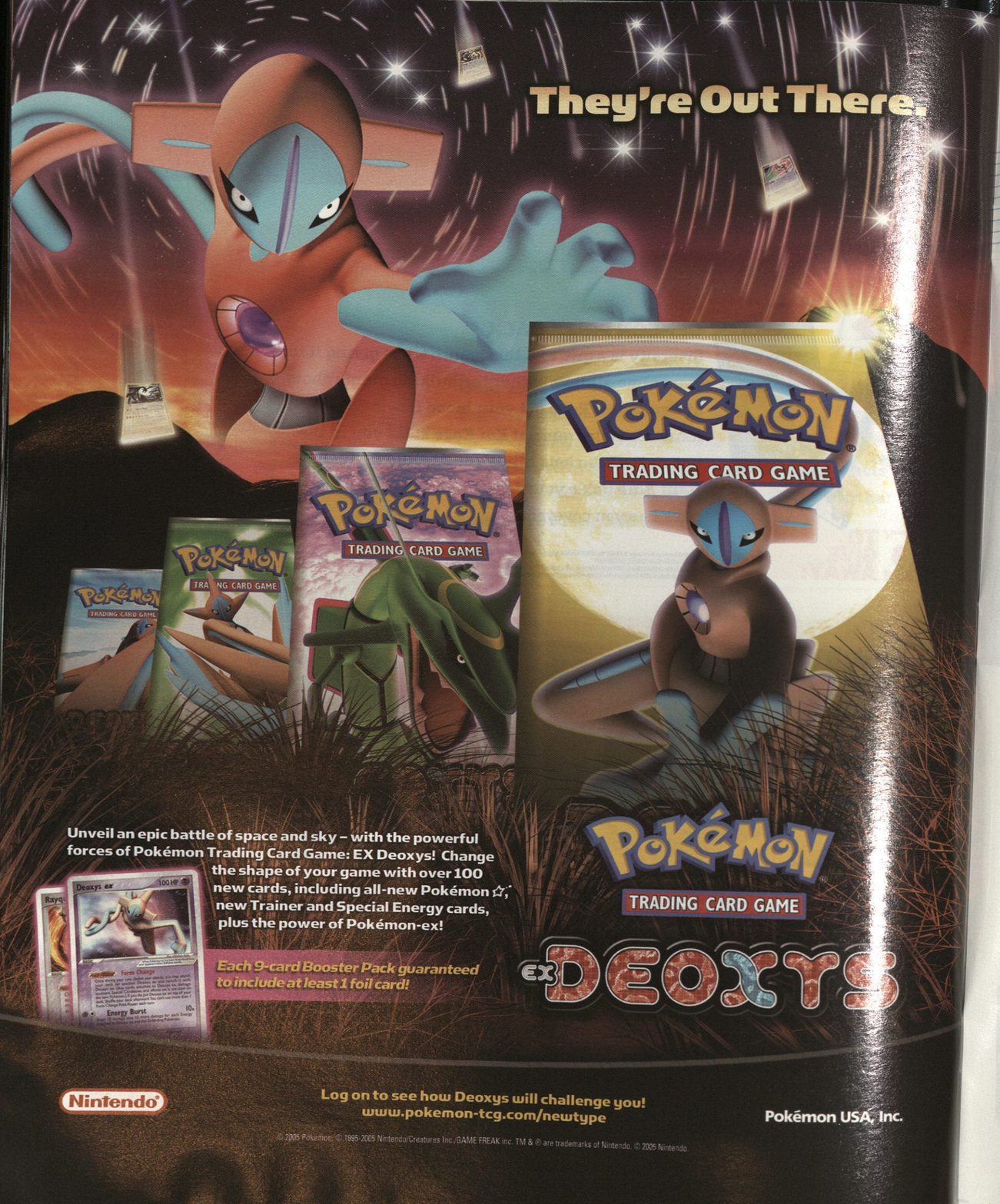
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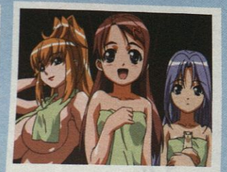


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- SKYHIGH
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Finishing: MAKIKO KOJIMA

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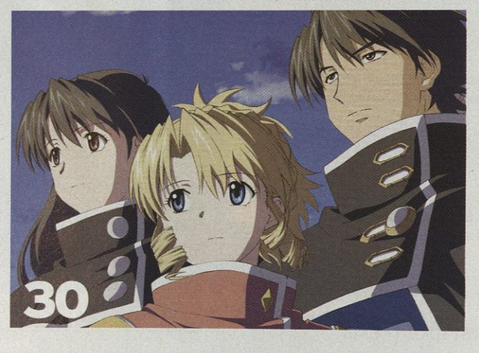

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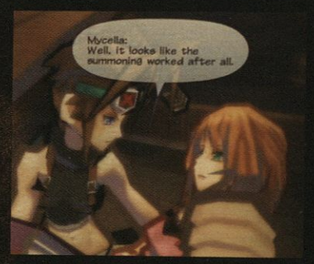

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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
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PlayStation 2

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